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ABSTRACT

This document consists of a report on a project to develop a newsletter for adult learners and unemployed and underemployed individuals in Pennsylvania who want to expand their educational training and improve their career opportunities. The ten newsletter issues published for volume 3 are appended to the report. Among the articles are the following: "Making Your Job More Secure"; "Understanding How Employers Use Resumes"; "The 'Mock' Interview"; "What Are Personality Tests"; "Why Not Form a Job Club?"; "GED (General Educational Development) Students' Skills above Other Graduates"; "Getting the Potential Employer's Attention"; "Preparing for Content-Skill Tests"; "The Job-Search Diary"; "Writing Tips for Today's Versatile Employee"; "Workplace-Literacy Programs: Key Components"; "Social Work--The Caring and Helping Profession"; "Meeting Deadline Pressures"; "Occupational Outlook Handbook"; "Putting the Pieces Together"; "'Where Are the Jobs?'"; "Networking for Your Job Search"; "Management by Objective"; "The Path to Success Begins with Education"; "Interested in Entering the Medical Field?"; "Employment Agencies: What to Look for and What to Look Out for?"; "Preparing a Reference List"; "The Cover Letter: Customized for Success"; "Greeters vs. Graters"; "Making Your Hobby Pay"; "Preparing for the Interview"; "Functional Skills: Words Interviewers Like to Hear"; "A Self-Discovery Checklist"; "Is There Job Security in Any Career?"; "What You Don't Know about the Unemployed Can Hurt Them"; "Making Decisions: Involving Family and Friends"; "Interviewing the Interviewer"; "Reaching Your Goal by Taking One Step at a Time"; "Schuylkill Training and Technology Center"; "Researching Potential Employers"; "Quality: Whose Job Is It Anyway?"; "Closeness and Conflict: Inseparable Outcomes of Teamwork"; "How Can You Recruit Others to Help You?"; "Does Your Writing Impress or Distress You?"; "Do Your Clients Have Solutions?"; and "Establishing Work-Force Education Goals." (CML)

ED352531

PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Fiscal Year 1991-1992

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Abstract

PASSAGE, "Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter," is a publication written specifically for adult learners and unemployed/underemployed individuals in Pennsylvania who seek to expand their educational training and to improve their career opportunities in today's everchanging workworld. PASSAGE is written and designed by The Midland Center, Inc. and is funded in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the United States Department of Education. The PASSAGE newsletter is published ten (10) times a year from September to June and has a monthly circulation of 2,200. Each issue of the newsletter is six (6) to eight (8) pages in length.

In 1989, the PASSAGE newsletter was established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education's 353 Task Force and The Midland Center, Inc. The goal of both organizations was to provide adult learners receiving services funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education with educational and career-development information/resources in a newsletter format. This publication was designed to place emphasis on the importance of life-long education and how it relates to the workplace. The newsletter was also a response to the absence of materials (a publication that is produced on a regular schedule) that were written for the adult learners seeking to improve their educational and career opportunities.

To create a newsletter that would be appropriate for a significant percentage of Pennsylvania's adult learners, close attention was given to the newsletter's content (choice of articles and the relevance of each article to the newsletter's overall mission), readability (reading level), and design (print size and layout).

PASSAGE is mailed to adult-basic education instructors and volunteers, employment trainers, career counselors, librarians, and various coordinators of self-help programs (i.e., single-parent homemaker services). Upon receiving the newsletter, it is photocopied and distributed to adults participating in educational and/or career-development programs/activities. Also, the newsletter is designed as a tool for educational instructors and tutors to use as a lesson plan to enhance their classroom materials.

Some of the subject areas covered in PASSAGE include employer-employee expectations in today's workplace, job-search tools, highlighting careers, employment/educational services, workplace-communication skills, teamwork, higher-education opportunities, technology, information for instructors, self-help/inspirational articles, workplace terms, labor-market surveys, success stories, reader input, on-the-job skills, and innovative classroom activities.

To provide educational and career-development information, the PASSAGE staff (an experienced team of writers, educators, and employment trainers) utilizes their personal work experiences to create a newsletter that is relevant, versatile, factual, and up-to-date and to network with program directors, instructors, and business professionals across the State.

To continually improve the overall quality of the newsletter and to expand its network, PASSAGE places great importance on reader feedback and maintains close contact with the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Introduction - *PASSAGE--"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"*

Objectives

The 1991-1992 PASSAGE newsletter was designed to provide educational and career-related information for Pennsylvania's adult learners who are in the process of earning their GED diplomas, preparing for college or vocational training, or planning to enter or reenter the workplace. The Midland Center, Inc. and the Pennsylvania Department of Education wanted to create a publication that would feature workplace and job-skills information that is prepared specifically for the adult learner. This publication was intended to be used not only as an independent "hands-on" resource for adult learners to read and understand but also as a classroom discussion tool and networking device for the many adult-basic education and career-development programs across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Rationale/Background

Concerned with the lack of workplace and job-skills information written specifically for the adult learner, the PASSAGE staff geared the newsletter toward this target audience, and close attention was given to the publication's content, tone, reading level, and layout. The Midland Center, Inc.'s research (reviewing similar newsletters, books, and educational resources) revealed that very few similar publications were available on a regular basis. (PASSAGE is published ten times a year.) There is a definite need for a resource that speaks to the adult learner and highlights the importance of education and how it applies to today's workplace.

In 1989, The Midland Center, Inc. received the approval of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to produce the PASSAGE newsletter. The Midland Center, Inc., a nonprofit training and development organization, has been in existence since 1983 and has provided educational, career development, and employment services to unemployed and underemployed individuals in Beaver County. The PASSAGE staff consists of individuals who are experienced adult instructors/counselors, job-developers, and communication professionals (writing, editing, publication-design skills). The 1991-1992 PASSAGE project year marks the completion of three years of providing workplace and job-skills information to Pennsylvania's adult learners.

Time Frame

During the 1991-1992 project year, The Midland Center, Inc. published ten (10) issues of PASSAGE. Each issue was six (6) to (10) pages. The newsletter was scheduled to be distributed on a monthly basis starting in September 1991 and concluding in June 1992.

** While complete issues of the publication were prepared according to schedule (written, edited, and camera ready), other delays caused the newsletter to change its distribution schedule. Consequently, several issues were often mailed during the same month.*

Staff/Key Personnel

The Midland Center, Inc. utilized two staff members, on a part-time basis, to organize and produce the 1991-1992 PASSAGE newsletter series. These individuals have training and professional experience in the areas of writing, editing, computer operations, layout and design, desktop publishing, and outreach/communications. *The positions needed to coordinate the project were:*

Managing Editor

This individual monitored the overall operations that led to the final production and distribution of the newsletter, assigned articles, and functioned as writer/editor.

Publications Editor/Desktop Publishing Specialist/Technical Assistant

This individual worked directly with the Managing Editor to write, edit, and assemble the material for the newsletter. Also, this individual was involved with preparing the layout/design, updating the database, and organizing the bulk mailing of the newsletter.

Audience

Feedback received from PASSAGE's readership, adult educators/counselors, career-development instructors, program operators, the Department of Education, and publications such as What's The Buzz supports the need for a newsletter that highlights workplace and job-skill information for adult learners. Also, feedback has revealed that PASSAGE is being used by adult learners, utilized by adult instructors in the classroom for educational, career, and employment training, and accessed by individuals visiting WORKPLACE Projects which are present in over 70 libraries in the Commonwealth.

Additional Report Copies

Persons interested in obtaining additional copies of this report may contact:

Dr. John Christopher, Director
Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street, 6th Floor
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126-0333

Clearinghouse Specialist
AdvancE
Pennsylvania Department of Education Resource Center
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126-0333

Summary

After three years of providing educational/career-related information, PASSAGE continues to be a publication which meets the needs of adult learners, unemployed/underemployed individuals, adult instructors/counselors, program directors, and employment/career-guidance trainers throughout Pennsylvania. This newsletter project works hand-in-hand with the training programs (ABE-GED services) and special projects (What's The Buzz) offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Statement of the Problem

Beginning in the early 1980s, Pennsylvania has been greatly affected by high unemployment rates in a majority of its counties. Many of these counties once flourished from the stability of abundant industries which today have downsized tremendously. This situation created a great problem for undereducated, unemployed, or underemployed individuals in Pennsylvania. To remain in competition, the workplace demands that its employees value education as a life-long process. A large percentage of the manual-labor jobs have given way to the service or technological-based jobs.

With this change in the workplace, the establishment of a publication which focused on workplace and job-skills information that was of importance to the educational, training, and employment needs of Pennsylvania's adult learners became a concern.

The PASSAGE newsletter, utilizing an established statewide network of educators and business professionals, highlights information that assists adult learners with their educational and career-related challenges.

In a report from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to the Legislature, the report states that 353 special-demonstration projects are necessary to improve the financial security of many Pennsylvanians who are benefiting from, or will benefit from, Act 143 programs (e.g., 30% receiving public assistance, 27% classified as displaced homemakers, and 36% were unemployed and available for work in 1990).

Goals and Objectives With Which to Attack the Problem

Since its beginning in 1989, the PASSAGE newsletter was proposed to provide a much needed resource for Pennsylvania's adult learners interested in improving their educational, career, and employment opportunities. The overall goals and objectives established to alleviate the problem were:

Focus

PASSAGE had to be different from other publications. No other publication similar to PASSAGE was available on a regular schedule (i.e., ten times a year). It was specifically geared toward the adult learner's educational/career-related concerns. While various magazines, newsletters, and books featured workplace and job-skills information, these publications did not focus entirely on material for the adult learner. A newsletter that complemented and enhanced other services and special projects offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education was needed.

Content

PASSAGE had to provide a variety of information that would be relevant to the adult learner. Assembling a variety of information would increase the likelihood that all readers would discover something that would help them with their situations. Also, PASSAGE gave the reader a starting point from which to learn more about a particular educational/career-related topic. Each article would provide the reader with the necessary information needed to take the next step (organizational names/addresses, telephone numbers, or places to conduct research). The subject areas covered in PASSAGE included:

- Overcoming Academic/Economic Barriers
- Employer-Employee Expectations In The Workplace
- Academic Preparedness And Growing Occupations/Career Fields
- Supportive Needs of Adult Learners
- Career/Workplace Readiness Programs For Adult Learners
- Counseling/Employment Concerns Of Adult Learners
- Technologies Impacting The Workplace
- Strategies For Job Search
- Statewide Workforce-Education Initiatives
- Teamwork
- Problem-Solving In The Workplace
- Academic Skills Used In The Workplace
- Reader Survey/Feedback
- Success Stories
- Instructor-Directed Readings

Customized Format/Design

Close attention was given to PASSAGE's appearance. The newsletter had to have a layout and design that was attractive and eye catching to the reader. The body text, titles, and subtitles make the articles easier to access. Also, the use of boxes, bullet statements, and graphics assisted in improving the overall look and accessibility of the newsletter. In addition, to make certain that adult learners would be comfortable using PASSAGE on a regular basis, a great deal of attention was given to the reading level of the articles in the newsletter.

Variety of Applications

First, PASSAGE was designed to be used as a resource tool that adult learners could easily read and understand without a great deal of assistance. Secondly, PASSAGE was designed to be used by adult instructors, volunteers, and counselors as a classroom or small-group discussion tool to better prepare adult learners for higher-education and employment opportunities. Lastly, PASSAGE was designed to establish a network of readers (educators, business professionals, and adult learners). The intention was to

open communication channels and to highlight the innovative ideas, success stories, and concerns of individuals and educational/employment-related programs across the State (i.e., the Workplace Project in the public libraries).

Accountability

The Midland Center, Inc. accepted the responsibility of researching and developing information which was accurate and appropriate for PASSAGE's audience. During editorial meetings, the staff made certain that all articles were properly researched and verified that the material presented was timely to the readership and had statewide application.

Procedures Employed to Study/Attack the Problem

To meet PASSAGE's intended goals, improve/update the newsletter, and provide an informative and accurate educational/career-related resources to adult learners, the newsletter staff focused on four main areas which included utilizing The Midland Center, Inc.'s experience with instructing adult learners/unemployed individuals, the PASSAGE staff's previous experience (three years of publishing PASSAGE), educators and business professionals who agreed to submit articles or resource information, and internal/external feedback.

The Midland Center, Inc., a nonprofit training and development organization, has been assisting individuals who need educational/employment training since 1983. The Midland Center, Inc.'s staff has worked with thousands of unemployed and underemployed individuals. Some of the services that have been provided over the years at The Midland Center, Inc. include GED brush-up courses, job-search workshops, single parent-homemaker services, career development for welfare recipients, and basic computer-applications training. Having acquired years of first-hand knowledge and having established a network of self-help programs, The Midland Center, Inc.'s staff became a valuable resource for producing a newsletter that addressed the concerns of the adult learner.

Next, the PASSAGE staff examined the results of the first two years that the newsletter had been published. During this period, the PASSAGE network of students, educators, and business professionals was established. Also, a great deal of effort was spent creating a publication that was unique--while trying at the same time to learn more about the audiences' needs. At the start of the third year of publication, the staff had acquired much information and began to upgrade and enhance the newsletter. For example, the 1991-1992 PASSAGE newsletter had a new look that was easier to read and more user friendly (soft colors, pull-out boxes, feature sections, and a three-column format). This change was based

on research and past publication experience. The experience acquired by the PASSAGE staff enabled the newsletter to improve and further develop.

The third area of importance was obtaining articles, conducting interviews, and collecting resource information from a network of educators and business professionals throughout the Commonwealth. Rather than rely only on their own experiences, the PASSAGE staff encouraged educators' and business professionals' participation; this added variety, credibility, and a unique viewpoint for the readers (i.e, Sidney Elkin, Director of the Alliance for Consumer Protection of Beaver County and Law and Political Science Instructor at Penn State University). Many individuals were contacted by telephone or letter. Also, this networking provided the PASSAGE staff with a better understanding of what services and special programs were being offered to adult learners and what may be of interest to the readers.

The final area of importance was feedback from the readers, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the PASSAGE newsletter staff. Surveys and articles encouraged feedback from the readers. The Department of Education was contacted on a regular basis and the progress of the newsletter was discussed. Also, monthly editorial meetings were held for the PASSAGE staff to analyze the effectiveness of the newsletter. Feedback from the readers, project advisors, and the PASSAGE staff became crucial to the success of the newsletter.

Objectives Which Were Met

To ensure that all objectives for the 1991-1992 PASSAGE newsletter project were met, the editors of PASSAGE prepared a list of subject areas that was designed to provide the adult learner and instructor with a variety of educational, workplace, job-skill, and employment-related topics.

Utilizing its experienced staff of educators and career-development trainers/counselors, network of specialists/professionals (Pennsylvania Department of Education and educational/training programs), three (3) years of experience with this project, and feedback from the readership, the PASSAGE staff had the resources necessary to meet the objectives of the newsletter.

Each PASSAGE newsletter contained main articles (500 to 750 words), informational sidebars (100 to 250 words), and STUDENTaccesspages (250 to 750 words). Forty (40) feature articles, (60) short-interest articles, and (10) STUDENTaccesspages were included in the 1991-1992 PASSAGE newsletter series. Also, all ten (10) issues (six to eight pages each) were printed and distributed to the readership by June 10, 1992.

The main articles and sidebars were written to provide the reader with a basic understanding of a particular topic. In addition, each main article provided the reader a resource from which to conduct more research or receive assistance. The articles served as a starting point to attain knowledge and to explore various employment and educational opportunities.

The STUDENTaccesspage, a monthly feature, was designed to be used as a customized instructional tool. This "hands-on" feature was written by an adult educator and was targeted to students, instructors, volunteer tutors, and counselors. Instructors/trainers were encouraged to use this innovative insert as a regular classroom-discussion exercise. The STUDENTaccesspage highlighted topics that are of importance in the classroom and in the workplace (e.g., accountability and teamwork).

Below is a detailed listing and explanation of the subject areas that were established to ensure that a variety of issues important to the educational/career-related development of adult learners were presented in PASSAGE.

Overcoming Academic/Economic Barriers

PASSAGE prepared a collection of articles for individuals who are attending school and/or want to establish successful careers. Obstacles they may encounter, methods to achieve success, and resources to obtain assistance were highlighted. Articles included "GED Students' Skills Above Other Graduates," October 1991 and "Reaching Your Goal By Taking One Step At A Time," May 1992.

Employer-Employee Expectations In The Workplace

Today's employees are expected to be educated, versatile, and willing to accept more responsibilities. With access to various labor-market statistics and a network of local employers, PASSAGE featured information that summarizes the general concerns of all employers and what they expect from their employees. "Making Your Job More Secure," September 1991 and "Interviewing The Interviewer," May 1992 were articles that discussed this topic.

Academic Preparedness And Growing Occupations/Career Fields

This subject area focused on featuring professions that may be of interest to the adult learner. Each article focused on educational requirements, experience, salary expectations, typical daily activities, personality types, and employment outlook. Articles that highlighted this subject area included "Social Work--The Caring and Helping Profession," November 1991 and "Interested in Entering The Medical Field?" February 1992.

Supportive Needs of Adult Learners

This collection of articles gave adult learners information about programs or services that could assist them during difficult times (e.g., unemployment or family problems). These articles were designed to let them know that they have somewhere to turn, and that they are not alone. Articles included "Why Not Form a Job Club," September 1991 and "Employee Assistance Programs Reduce Stress," April 1992.

Career/Workplace Readiness Programs For Adult Learners

Each year, PASSAGE receives information from many programs and services that provide employment/educational assistance to adult learners. Many of the programs/services can assist individuals who are interested in earning their GED diploma, attending college, or entering/reentering the job market. Also, this information is useful to educational/employment program operators wanting to improve their services or expand their network. "The Workplace Project: An Update," March 1992 and "Schuylkill Training and Technology Center: A Model Program," May 1992 were articles that featured this information.

Counseling/Employment Concerns Of Adult Learners

PASSAGE featured a number of articles that provided the readers with information on how to improve their employability and to utilize helpful guidelines when making decisions. Articles that highlighted this topic were "Preparing For Content-Skill Tests," October 1991 and "Making Decisions--Involving Family and Friends," April 1992.

Technologies Impacting The Workplace

This subject area provided adult learners with information on technological changes and how these changes may affect their future career plans. The skills taught in the adult-education classrooms including college/vocational schools can help adult learners prepare for the challenges ahead. Articles that discussed this topic were "Tomorrow's Workplace," October 1991 and "Fewer Fish In The Sea," April 1992.

Strategies For Job Search

Knowing how to conduct a successful job search is just as important as receiving an education and preparing for a career. Without knowing how to prepare a resume/cover letter, establish a network, or be prepared for a job interview, an individual will have a difficult time utilizing his/her skills and talents. "PASSAGE's Resume-Writing Series,"September through December 1991, and "Where Are The Jobs?", January 1992 were among many articles that focused on this topic.

Statewide Workforce-Education Initiatives

These articles were written specifically for instructors. Programs, services, and innovative concepts were presented to instructors in the hope of opening communication channels and showing how education and business can work together to better prepare adults for the work world. Articles included "Workplace-Literacy Programs: Key Components," November 1992 and "Deaf Adult Literacy Tutor Handbook," May 1992.

Teamwork

Teamwork in the classroom and in the workplace has always been emphasized in PASSAGE. Many individuals fail to realize that the skills used in the classroom can apply directly to the work environment. Teamwork is important to achieving success in all aspects of life. "Tandem Jobs," April 1992 and "Closeness and Conflict: Inseparable Outcomes of Teamwork," June 1992 discussed this topic.

Problem-Solving In The Workplace

Similar to teamwork, PASSAGE featured several articles which highlighted participative approaches that can be used in the classroom and in the workplace. Many companies (labor and management) are requesting that employees be involved in the decision-making/problem-solving process. "Quality: Whose Job Is It Anyway?", and "STUDENTaccesspage Focus: Problem Solving In The Workplace," June 1992 focused on this subject matter.

Academic Skills Used In The Workplace

PASSAGE has always stressed the importance of obtaining solid academic skills and how these skills are used in the workplace. These articles give examples of how skills such as writing, speaking, and computing are used everyday in the workplace. Articles that featured this topic were "Tips for Today's Versatile Employee," November 1991 and "STUDENTaccesspage Focus: Management By Objective," January 1992.

Reader Feedback

Each year PASSAGE encourages reader feedback by preparing surveys and listing the newsletter's address and telephone number. Constant communication with the readership is an essential part of providing a useful service. "PASSAGE's Resume Writing Series," December 1991 and "STUDENTaccesspage 1992 Reader Survey," February 1992 were included in the 1991-1992 PASSAGE newsletter.

Evaluation Techniques

To achieve and exceed an established level of quality and to meet various set benchmarks, the PASSAGE newsletter staff utilized external and internal evaluation methods to analyze the success of the newsletter and needs of the readers. These external and internal evaluation methods have proven to be essential components to PASSAGE's adaptability, success, and growth.

External Evaluations

External evaluations consist of encouraging the readership to write or call, conducting reader surveys, and seeking the advice of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Director and Special Project Advisor. This combination enables the staff to have a clearer picture of the audiences' needs and concerns.

With articles such as "An Introduction To PASSAGE's Resume Series," "The STUDENTaccesspage 1992 Reader Survey," and "PASSAGE Survey Results," the PASSAGE staff encouraged readers to call the newsletter's 800 number or to write to the staff and discuss how the newsletter is being used, what articles are helpful, what information should be included in future issues, and how the overall quality of the newsletter can be improved.

A survey was conducted in the February 1992 issue of PASSAGE. Some of the questions that were included in the survey were:

- What types of articles interest you or relate to your situation?
- What is your favorite article from the newsletter?
- What is your impression of PASSAGE's content, readability, design, and utility?
- Can you give one example of how PASSAGE was helpful to you?
- Do you have any additional suggestions that would help us improve the newsletter?

The feedback received from the readers who responded to articles or the survey was positive and helped refine this year's look and content (e.g., new layout and design and articles on resume writing and success stories). While written suggestions/comments and survey sheets were useful tools to measure PASSAGE's performance, the most effective tool utilized by the readership for communicating with the PASSAGE staff was accessing the newsletter's 800 Number. The readership appreciated the convenience of the 800 Number. With the 800 Number, the PASSAGE staff was able to discuss the newsletter's effectiveness in greater detail and create a more personal and accessible service/product for the readership.

Here are some brief examples of comments (letters and surveys) from program instructors, counselors, and administrators who received the PASSAGE newsletter during the 1991-1992 program year:

"Recently, a colleague gave me the October 1991 issue of your newsletter 'PASSAGE.' I enjoyed it and found it to be very helpful. I am requesting that I be placed on your mailing list."

Mary Mulroy, Counselor
ABE/GED Program
Central Presbyterian Church
McKeesport, PA

"I would like to request copies of your free publication 'PASSAGE' for use in the Career Development/Life Skills Program at the State Correctional Institution at Muncy."

Dianne E. Paroli
Job Placement Specialist
State Correctional Institution
Muncy, PA

"I recently received a copy of 'PASSAGE,' your TMCI newsletter from a representative at Adult Literacy Action, Monaca. This is an excellent newsletter--and very appropriate for assisting many of our residents at Penn Pavilion. Of particular interest are articles pertaining to job-search techniques, although the focus of the newsletter in general makes it one that is of potential benefit to the population we serve. Could you please send or call with information about subscribing? I would very much appreciate the opportunity to incorporate this resource into our vocational-assistance program. Thank you for your consideration--and for a great newsletter!"

Deborah Pagani
Staff Representative
Penn Pavilion
New Brighton, PA

"PASSAGE is a resource utilized by the Prep Project. The honest approach and down-to-business attitude of PASSAGE are refreshing. I utilize PASSAGE as both a staff development and a career guidance tool. I am impressed with the versatility of PASSAGE. The Midland Center, Inc. has filled a great need in Adult Education."

Barbara T. Kirby
Employment Prep Project
Project Manager
Waynesburg, PA

"I have been very impressed with your newsletter 'PASSAGE.' I find it filled with useful information and have passed copies on to public and state prison libraries. As you know the State Library piloted the Workplace project a few years ago with six sites. We now have over 70 libraries offering these services. Is it possible to ensure that every library on the enclosed list of Workplace sites receive a subscription? Since few public libraries receive professional career guidance journals 'PASSAGE' will be of immense value."

Stephen M. Mallinger
Library Development Advisor
State Library of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, PA

"PASSAGE makes me more aware of adult students' special needs; therefore, it makes me better equipped to help them."

Joan H. Noblit
Coordinator of Community Education
Quakertown Community School District
Quakertown, PA

"From the responses to the survey and from comments received on the survey forms, it is our opinion PASSAGE is meeting a need for workplace and job-skills information on the part of adult basic and literacy educators in Pennsylvania. Further, the positive ratings given the newsletter contents would indicate the newsletter is meeting the need in a positive manner."

David W. Fluke
Project Director
Adult Education Linkage Services
Troy, PA

A final method of external evaluation included maintaining open channels of communication, on a regular basis, with Dr. John Christopher, Ed. D., Director, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, and PASSAGE's Project Advisor, Mr. Dan Partin. Both individuals shared their input and offered suggestions that helped enhance the newsletter and expand its network of contacts across the Commonwealth. Also, this was an excellent opportunity for the PASSAGE staff to share feedback that has been received from the readership.

Internal Evaluation

On a monthly basis, the PASSAGE editors scheduled a meeting to discuss feedback received from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the readership, to review accomplishments, to set assignments (articles, reports, and contacts), to brainstorm for future issues, and to critique published issues of the newsletter.

Also, input was received from The Midland Center, Inc.'s experienced staff of adult-education instructors and career-development specialists/counselors. These individuals assisted with the writing, proofreading, and bulk mailing of the newsletter.

Each issue of the newsletter was proofread by no less than four (4) individuals. Spell-check and grammar-check programs were also utilized for reviewing and preparing the newsletter. In addition, all information presented in the newsletter was reviewed and verified for accuracy and appropriateness to the PASSAGE readership. (All guest writers or individuals who submitted information packets received a camera-ready copy of the newsletter before it was printed. This practice ensured that information was factual and relevant.)

This internal evaluation process was a necessary component that helped PASSAGE reach and exceed its project goals for the 1991-1992 project year.

Procedure for the Distribution of the Findings and the Products

For the 1991-1992 project year, ten (10) issues (each issue was six to eight pages in length) of PASSAGE were mailed to educational/employment-related programs for adults throughout the Commonwealth. During this year, PASSAGE had a monthly circulation of 2,200.

The mail list was assembled by securing the names and addresses from What's The Buzz, The Pennsylvania Department of Education, and individuals (instructors, program operators, volunteers, and counselors) who discovered PASSAGE through a colleague or by word of mouth.

The newsletter was designed, edited, and formatted by the PASSAGE staff. The Midland Center, Inc.'s staff assisted with the writing, bulk mailing, and up-dating of the reader data base (PASSAGE's entire circulation).

Camera-ready copies of the newsletter produced by the PASSAGE staff were sent to a commercial print shop for mass production and folding. (Each year PASSAGE receives three bids from area print shops. Price, quality, and turnaround time are all important factors in choosing a printer.)

To improve the timeliness and to increase efficiency, various software packages (Ventura Publisher, WordPerfect, RightWriter, and Mars 800 Scanner) were used to write, edit, and design the newsletters.

The combination of an experienced staff, state-of-the-art software, a quality commercial printer, an efficient data base, and monthly schedule enabled PASSAGE to distribute the product in a timely and efficient manner.

Conclusion

The 1991-1992 PASSAGE project has met established goals and has continued to expand its network of readers and contributors. After three years of disseminating workplace and job-skills information, the PASSAGE newsletter has found its niche with adult learners, unemployed/underemployed individuals, adult instructors/counselors, program directors, and employment/career-guidance trainers in Pennsylvania. In addition, the PASSAGE newsletter served as a "hands-on" resource that enhanced the many programs and projects funded and supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

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PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 1 **Special Job-Search Strategies Issue 1991**

Making Your Job More Secure

To be successful in today's competitive job market, you must make yourself more valuable to your organization. *Here are some tips to help you with this task:*

- **Act** as if it's your business. Think like your employer: A constant flow of well-treated customers brings profits.
- **Do** more than you have been doing. Take on new duties, work extra hours, and don't wait to be asked.
- **Determine** what skills your company needs and acquire those skills. Attend seminars and classes. Act quickly so you can show that your absence will leave a gap the company can't afford.
- **Give** your employer what you expect--some positive feedback.
- **Never** think you can't be replaced. Someone with the same experience might be willing to work for less.
- **Seek** better and more efficient ways to do things. Make sure that management will see what you recommend as a long-term saving and not a new expense.
- **Rid** your mind of "I deserve it" thinking. Examples: "I get in early, so I'm entitled to leave a couple of hours early." "I haven't had a day off for months, so I'll call in sick."

Source: John R. Graham, Graham Communications, 40 Oval Road, Quincy, MA 02170.

"Tell Me About Yourself."

For some reason, many job seekers dread the prospect of talking about themselves in the job interview. *Here are a few hints to follow whenever you are in an interview:*

- **Be careful** not to sound arrogant. Use a confident tone of voice but avoid exaggerations of your accomplishments. Job-search experts suggest that you reveal something memorable about yourself that your interviewer will think about when evaluating you for the job. An example might be: "I see every problem that affects my work as an opportunity to look for a solution."
- **Stay away** from information that is too personal. If you are a "take-charge individual," do not support that self-description with the fact you were abandoned by your family and had to survive in spite of a terrible childhood. Instead, use an example from your work history that supports why others would view you as a "take-charge individual."
- **Remember** that when an interviewer says "Tell Me About Yourself" he or she is really trying to discover what type of person you would be as an employee--looking for information about your work habits, goals, attitude, and personality.

The STUDENTaccesspage provides you with an exercise that will help you feel more comfortable and prepared when talking about yourself to a potential employer. Ask your classmates and family to help you because they may find it easier to highlight your good qualities.

PASSAGE Resume Series

Introduction

Do you need to prepare a resume for your job search? Most definitely!

If you are currently seeking employment, you need a well-organized resume to get interviews. There are no exceptions. To help you better understand the importance of a good resume and to help you organize and write this necessary document, PASSAGE will feature a series of articles on resume preparation in the months ahead.

The first article in this series will examine the purpose of a resume and how you can better understand the interviewer's point of view and approach. In the future, topics such as different types of resumes, content/basic ingredients, resume do *s* and don'ts, and organization of your information/resources will be highlighted.

The PASSAGE staff hopes you find these articles to be helpful. *If you have any tips or information that you would like featured in this series, please call us at 1-800-345-5443. Thank you!*

Understanding How Employers Use Resumes

Why does an employer require all job candidates to submit a resume? To answer this question, you should try to put yourself in the place of the interviewer or potential employer.

Understanding an employer's concerns and needs will help you understand the many purposes of a resume and communicate the right information. This article explains how resumes are important before, during, and after the interview.

☐ Before the Interview

The first reason why an employer requests a resume is because of time limitations. The employer simply does not have enough time to meet (in person) with everyone interested in a position at his/her company. In other words, the resume serves as a screening device. Keep in mind that the employer's time is limited, so your resume should be powerful, short, and to the point.

The resume is your chance to get the employer's attention and to convince him/her that you are the best candidate. However, you must remember that you only have a few minutes, or in some cases seconds, to catch his/her attention. Until you get a chance to meet with the employer in person, the resume will be doing most of the work for you.

☐ During the Interview

When your resume interests the interviewer enough to schedule a personal meeting, this document will then be used as an agenda or a guideline for the interviewer to follow. Many interviewers ask questions based on the information presented in your resume.

So, what does this mean? This means that by preparing a well-constructed resume that focuses on your skills/strengths, you can help establish the direction of the interview. The resume will help the potential employer and you to better prepare for the interview.

☐ After the Interview

Depending on the job or number of positions available at the company that is hiring, the interviewer may need your resume as a reminder of your skills/qualifications. During this stage, the interviewer will review his or her notes, compare you to other job candidates, and reexamine your resume. An effective resume will serve as a better reminder than a poorly organized resume.

During all stages of the job search/hiring process, your resume serves as a powerful tool that assists you in obtaining employment. By understanding why employers ask for resumes and how they use resumes, you can approach the resume-writing process with confidence and achieve greater success.

Resume-Writing Series

Next Month

"Getting The Potential Employer's Attention"

The "Mock" Interview – A Valuable Practice Tool

The best way for job hopefuls to prepare for employment interviews is to practice going through the interviewing process in what employment counselors call a *mock interview*. This can be accomplished in any classroom with the following supplies and set up:

- A list of questions that employers always ask in job interviews
- A video camcorder
- A VCR
- A television set
- A blank video tape
- Two rooms (classroom and office)

Have someone act out the role of the interviewer/employer. Make certain your interviewer is familiar with 30 interview questions. Have an alternate room where everyone can wait while each person gets the opportunity to go through the mock interview.

Each interview should last approximately 15 minutes. An actual job interview usually lasts longer. However, 15 minutes in a mock-interview exercise should be enough time to get a feel for the job candidate's interviewing ability. Nervousness is a normal reaction that occurs during the interviewing process, and the mock interviewer has the responsibility of putting each interviewee at ease.

Video-tape each interview, one after another, then preview the tape in front of the entire class. The instructor, as well as the classmates, can offer constructive suggestions. Your peers' comments on the quality of the interview are as important as the instructor's input and suggestions.

This is a very valuable exercise, and it clears up many fears of interviewing and builds higher levels of self-esteem and confidence. Few tools do a better job of preparing you for real job interviews than the mock interview and peer/instructor critique.

Fear and apprehension are by far the main contributors to job candidates experiencing difficultly during the interview. Going through the interviewing process is the only way to overcome this fear and apprehension.

The interviewees must be their own best salespersons. Job candidates should be in control of the direction and content of the interview. They must convey the right information to the potential employer in a positive manner. *If they don't, who will?*

When you are going on a job interview, try to think of yourself as a new car and memorize all of the options on your "personalized window-sticker." This is essential information that is needed for disclosing all of the options (your skills, qualities, and experience) that make you a better choice than the other applicants or "models."

So, to help you prepare for the interview, you need to have at least twenty statements highlighting your unique abilities and skills. It is your job to make the interviewer knowledgeable of these qualities during the interview.

Some sample interview questions that many employers use:

- **Why** should we hire you for this position?
- **What** are your strongest skills?
- **How** would you describe your personality?
- **Are** you people or task oriented?
- **What** is the minimum salary you would accept?
- **What** can you do for us that someone else cannot?
- **How** can you apply your experience to our operations/business?
- **Why** do you want to work for our company?

These are just some of many interview questions. Keep in mind that interview questions are divided into four main categories. *They are:*

- ☐ **Skills, Qualifications, and Experience**
- ☐ **Education, Knowledge, and Intellect**
- ☐ **Personality and Work Traits**
- ☐ **Requirements, Aspirations, and Interests**

Remember, resumes get you interviews, and only successful interviews get you jobs. So prepare, rehearse, and get the proper attitude to make a great impression on potential employers.

What Are Personality Tests?

When you begin your job search and obtain an interview, the individual conducting the interview may ask you to take a personality test. Although not all employers use this test in the interviewing process, it is to your advantage to be prepared for this pre-employment test. The personality test is unlike most tests that you have taken. In fact, there are really no wrong or right answers. You cannot pass or fail this test.

The Purpose

What exactly is a personality test? A personality test is a tool an employer may use to measure a job applicant's behavior patterns (actions and reactions to certain situations) which are needed to complete on-the-job duties. These written tests ask many personal and confidential questions. The tests may suggest which applicants are at risk for substance abuse, unfit for stressful jobs (power plant operator), or poorly suited for positions that may have rejection (salesman) or physical threats (police officer) associated with them.

These tests examine the applicant's positive and negative behavior patterns. The results of the tests will provide the employer with a general idea of each candidate's level of loyalty, productivity, punctuality, and honesty.

The Labor Market

Today's labor market has seen the rise of many small businesses. These businesses typically hire less than twenty workers. In this type of workplace, employees must get along well together to maintain productivity and morale. You may face a personality test when applying for a job that demands close interaction and cooperation with all employees.

Larger companies also make use of the personality test during the interview. Companies that deal directly or indirectly with public safety are likely to conduct these tests before hiring. Some examples include bus driver, train engineer, airplane mechanic, and child-care worker.

Test Questions

The types of questions are usually yes/no or true/false. The format is usually one short question or statement. Once again, these questions can be quite personal; however, it is important to remember that these tests are kept confidential.

Here are some examples of personality test questions that you may see:

People generally hate strangers.

I am more important than anyone.

I am less ambitious than most.

I like dangerous sports.

I do not sleep most nights.

My parents were good people.

Poetry makes me angry.

I like snakes, spiders, and bugs.

Test-Taking Tips

If you are asked to complete a personality test by a potential employer, here are suggestions that you can follow when taking the test:

- **Be honest**. Answers that are not accurate can be detected and could be used to disqualify you from further employment consideration.
- **Answer** all questions. Unanswered questions send a warning sign to the potential employer about your ability to fulfill the requirements of the position.
- **Use** your own answers. Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to copy someone's answers.
- **Remember** that personality tests are looking for behavior patterns. The same question may be repeated several times during the test (using different words and phrases). Be consistent when answering questions; give the same answers to repetitious questions.

The personality test is just one of many tools or methods an employer can use to choose the right individuals for his/her organization. Understanding the interviewing process and knowing what to expect during an interview will help contribute to your successful job search.

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

The Seven Rules of Interviewing

Always Be Honest
Those who succeed at work are those who are honest. Always tell the truth and support your opinions with facts and true examples.

Initiate and Participate Fully
When we display a willingness to lead, we are providing a preview of how we would perform on the job.

If In doubt, Check It Out
Never underestimate the value of an intelligent question. Show the courage to ask for more information.

Think Like An Owner
If you owned the company, would you want somebody like you as an employee? Make sure the answer is yes.

Flex, Bend, and Rebound
Read the interviewer's needs and respond to those needs. But as you shift your style, maintain your honesty and integrity.

When in Trouble, Return To Purpose
When the person across from you doesn't seem to listen or care about you, remember why you are there and stick with it.

Continue Learning Every Day
Wherever you are in life, you will be using at least some of your interviewing skills again, probably to get another job.

Source: Daniel Marsula, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

So, You Want To Be A Boss!

If you had the opportunity to select your boss, what type of individual would you want to work for? PASSAGE's writers did a very informal survey which yielded some very consistent responses.

If you aspire to the position of "boss," examine our findings to see if you would be a good boss!

- **Be fair** minded and accessible to employees.
- **Be interested** in the employees' work.
- **Be willing** to compliment employees who do a good job.
- **Be willing** to constructively criticize and help employees who do not work well.
- **Have** a vision for the organization.
- **Know** how to share the organization's vision with the employees.
- **Be humble** about your own accomplishments.

Well, how did you rate? Are you prepared to live up to these expectations?

Being the boss is not easy. It requires patience, understanding, knowledge, commitment, and the ability to hire employees who judge themselves according to the same standards of behavior.

What Should You Take To The Job Interview?

There are many opinions about what items you should take with you to a job interview. You must decide from the following suggestions which items are best suited to support the position you are seeking.

Whatever items you decide are necessary, please have an organizer or small briefcase in which to carry them. You do not want to appear unorganized when asked to present certain documents to the interviewer.

- ☐ Extra Resumes
- ☐ Pen, Pencil, and Notebook Paper
- ☐ Typed List of References
- ☐ Certificates, Diplomas, and Transcripts
- ☐ Examples of Your Work (i.e., a special report you completed)
- ☐ Personal Documents such as your driver's license and social security registration number

STUDENTaccesspage

Focus: Tell Me About Yourself.

Introduction

The job interview provides an opportunity for you to sell yourself (attitude, skills, interests, and abilities) to an employer. You become the product; the employer, in a real sense, is the potential customer. There are many reasons why you want and need a job; however, you need to first address why the employer should pick you as the candidate most likely to succeed if given this opportunity of employment.

Here is a self-discovery exercise for you to complete before the interview. Take ample time to answer each question carefully. Then, you will need to make accurate conclusions about yourself, based on your responses to the questions.

Tell Me About Yourself.

1. How can I use each of these words in a sentence which describes my work habits?

Successful

Eager

Education

Attitude

Flexible

Teamwork

Challenges

Stress

Communication

2. What three words best describe my personality? Why these words? Give an example of a situation to support each word choice.

Word Choice #1

Example

Word Choice #2

Example

(Continued on page 7)

Word Choice #3

_____

Example

_____

_____

_____

3. What would others (including former coworkers, family members, teachers, and friends) say about me if they had to write a recommendation letter?

To complete question three, ask no less than five (5) individuals to complete the following sentence:

_____*insert your name*_____ is the best candidate for the job because I personally know of his/her_____

_____.

4. Are there patterns in the type of responses you wrote and received from others while completing your self-discovery exercise? If your answer to this question is yes, list the comments which were consistently reported about you. If your answer is no, describe why you feel that the responses were so different.

Write your conclusions here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Employer Expectations – You Should Not Be Surprised.

If you were to ask an employer what he or she values in employees, the following responses should not surprise you.

Employers expect employees to:

- **Read** well enough to do their jobs effectively and safely
- **Write** well enough to communicate properly to customers and coworkers
- **Compute** well enough to tackle numerical tasks in the workplace
- **Listen** well enough to identify workplace problems that need to be addressed
- **Think** well enough to find solutions to those problems
- **Speak** well enough to relate those solutions to customers and coworkers

In order to provide a good living for their families and themselves, today's employees encounter many new challenges which their workplace predecessors did not have to handle. These challenges require workers to think more creatively, employ negotiating skills, and continually seek higher levels of skill and knowledge.

Employers expect employees to have high self-esteem, pride in their work, and the motivation to achieve their individual goals, as well as the organization's goals.

If you are considering a first-time career choice or changing careers, you should begin by making a career choice which offers work that is interesting and exciting to you. In addition, you must recognize the importance of finding work in a field that will help you meet your employer's expectations. Then, you will not be surprised by your employer's expectations--instead, you'll find ways to surpass those expectations!

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This newsletter was produced internally by TMCI, 617 Midland, Avenue, Midland, PA 15059. (412) 643-1350 or 1-800-345-5443

Why Not Form A Job Club?

There are many ways to make the community aware of your career-guidance services for adult learners. The formation of a Job Club is one responsible way that many organizations like yours have used to recruit and help others make decisions about their future employment possibilities. Do you have the staff, knowledge, and resources to form a Job Club within your organization? Job Clubs are generally organized to offer group and individualized assistance to special-needs populations.

Group activities include:

- **Field trips** to local college and training institutions to learn firsthand the benefits of acquiring marketable skills
- **Presentations** by area employers who have knowledge of their industries' workforce needs
- **Films**, videos, and demonstrations which promote job-search techniques
- **Meetings** among the job-search candidates to share information and emotional support with their fellow Job Club members

Individualized activities include:

- **Assistance** with filling out applications and writing resumes
- **Practice** exercises to refine the techniques needed to conduct a good interview
- **Counseling** opportunities for addressing problems and barriers that impede training and employment
- **Vocational testing** to discover career options

In addition, you may want to create a Job Board. A Job Board can be used to list the positions available to your club members. Many unemployed persons cannot afford the delivery of their local newspapers. Copies of the want ads from different newspapers can easily be cut and posted on a Job Board. Job leads from other sources, such as employers who prefer to call your agency rather than use public advertisements, can also be typed and posted for others to use. Job Club members may also have job leads which are not right for them but useful to their fellow job seekers. Many jobs are found through this method which is known as the "hidden-job market."

Support services for an effective Job Club are very important. For example, you should have resource persons who can write and type well. Word processing and duplicating equipment will also be needed to prepare the documents Job Club members will need to conduct a successful job-search campaign. Vocational-resource guides listing employment outlooks, salaries, and education and training expectations are invaluable tools for your Job Club library.

The formation of a Job Club does not have to be an expensive venture for your organization. There are many community members who already have the personnel and resources to help your organization start a Job Club. Invite them to an informal meeting and discuss how your organization wants to work with them to help the unemployed find work.

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PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 2 October 1991

GED Students' Skills Above Other Graduates

Some employees are embarrassed because they didn't graduate from high school but received General Education Development (GED) diplomas instead.

Now they have a reason to hold their heads high. According to a report by the American Council on Education, GED graduates are likely to have literacy skills that are higher than those of high-school graduates.

The study describes the job skills, choices, incomes, and employment and educational goals of GED candidates. The report's authors found that average scores of GED graduates on tests for social studies, literature and the arts, and science were higher than those for graduating high-school seniors. The scores for all GED candidates, including those who did not pass, were equal to the scores of seniors.

The report also showed that in 1989, four out of five GED candidates were either employed or looking for jobs. Half were employed for pay and 30 percent were looking for work. The report found that male candidates were more likely to be working than were female candidates (55 percent versus 45 percent). But 22 percent of the women, compared to 11 percent of men who took the tests, were not seeking employment.

More than three out of five candidates who worked said their jobs required average to high levels of literacy.

Most of the candidates' jobs fell into three categories: sales, administrative support, and technical occupations (24 percent); labor, machine operation, and transportation (20 percent); and service occupations (17 percent). Women candidates who worked were likely to be employed in sales, service, or administrative support positions (50 percent). Forty-nine percent of the men said they were employed as laborers or machine operators, or in service or precision production occupations.

The report also found that many GED candidates had plans to enroll in postsecondary programs. Three in ten planned to attend community colleges during the following year; one in four hoped to enroll in a technical, trade, or vocational school; and one in ten intended to enroll in a four-year institution.

Source: Training & Development, Nov. 1991

Quotes

"Learn the art of patience. Apply discipline to your thoughts when they become anxious over the outcome of a goal. Impatience breeds anxiety, fear, discouragement, and failure. Patience creates confidence, decisiveness, and a rational outlook, which eventually leads to success."

Brian Adams

"One must not lose desires. They are mighty stimulants to creativeness, to love, and to long life."

Alexander Bogomoletz

"The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do."

Walter Bagehot

Getting The Potential Employer's Attention

How can you make your resume stand out from all the others? What steps/precautions can you take to keep your resume from being screened out? Unfortunately, there are no quick and simple answers to these questions. To prepare a powerful resume and cover letter, you need to understand where your materials will be going and how you can make them better than the rest.

When you start your job search, realize that your job-search materials do not always go directly to the employer's desk. Why is this so? Because of the great number of resumes an employer receives for a job opening, the employer often needs the help of support staff to screen all resumes. The main function of these "screeners" is to find job candidates who should not be interviewed.

It sounds cruel. However, this is one of those "job search facts-of-life." Many employers just don't have the time to review every resume. They instruct their support staff on what qualifications are needed for each job opening. So, the next question is--"What can you do to get past the first screening and to get the employer's attention?"

Here are some suggestions that will get your resume/cover letter to its intended destination (the interviewer's desk) and help you get an interview:

- **Be** certain that your resume and cover letter answer this question for the employer--"What can this candidate do for me?" Imagine you are the employer Ask yourself, "what qualities/skills would I look for in an employee?"
- **Know** how to market yourself. If you have experience or knowledge in more than one specific area or field, prepare a different resume for each field that you plan to target. Make certain that your resume is written specifically for the job you intend to secure. Be specific; employers will discard most resumes that seem to be unfocused and written for "just any job opening."
- **Include** the name of the employer/interviewer in your cover letter and on your envelope. Make your materials personal. If you talked to someone who works at the company (interviewer or manager), mention the conversation. The person screening materials will be less likely to discard your resume/cover letter if they believe the employer may know you or may be expecting your materials.
- **Create** a design that is easy to read. The interviewer should be able to have a basic understanding of your skills, experience, and educational background just by briefly scanning your resume. Eliminate the clutter; use titles, subtitles, bullets, underline, bolding, and white space (the spacing between lines of text and paragraphs). An unorganized resume is likely to be discarded.
- **Make** sure you use quality paper for your resume. The paper should be white, ivory, or light grey; avoid flashy or bright colors. The paper should be a little heavier than regular typing paper. (24 pound paper is a good choice.) Quality paper adds a needed touch of professionalism and will help your materials stand out from the rest of the pack.
- **Have** your resume printed, using a computer word processing package and laser printer (if possible). Use a high-quality photocopying machine for all your copies. If you do not have access to this equipment, look in your yellow pages under Resume Service, Word Processing Service, Secretarial Service, or Copy Center. Also, try to have your resume stored on a computer disk. Resumes that are stored on a computer disk can be updated quickly and cost-effectively. If you are on a tight budget, use a typewriter to prepare your resume; avoid, at all costs, preparing a handwritten resume.
- **Send** your resume and cover letter in a white 9" X 12" (catalog) envelope. An attractive resume should not be folded. (Remember this envelope requires extra postage; however, the end result should be worth the investment.)

With a good game plan (see page 3), the extra effort you put in your job-search materials will provide you with the opportunity to prove yourself in the interview.

Next month's ***Resume-Writing Series*** *will highlight what to include and not to include in your resume. Also, a resume worksheet will be provided for you to organize your ideas.*

Preparing for Content-Skill Tests

Previous issues of PASSAGE have taken a look at the different methods that employers use to select the best candidates. Past articles have discussed topics such as completing an application for employment (March 1991), taking a personality test , and preparing for the interview (Special Job Search Issue 1991).

In a continuing effort to provide tips that will help you to prepare for the job interview, this article examines the "hands-on tests" or content-skill tests that many employers ask job applicants to complete during the interview.

Because every job requires a certain set of skills to complete the day-to-day assignments, employers often administer tests that measure the various skills that are needed to complete a particular job. Skills (content-skill tests) are much easier to measure than behavior patterns (personality tests).

The skills needed to fulfill requirements of a job are defined by office managers or shift supervisors. Top management then takes the information prepared by the office managers or shift supervisors and seeks to find a test that measures the necessary job skills. Each individual who applies for a job is given the test, and the test scores are placed on file by the personnel department.

A content-skill test usually has a reading comprehension section that is critical to job performance. This section may ask you to read package contents, directions for use of chemicals, emergency posters, or any other job-related poster, flyer, sign, or message.

Another part of the test is usually math. This section tests your ability to perform calculations or solve various problems which might arise on the job. Some problems include ratios, square roots, measurements, and metric-English conversions. *Here are some examples:* If a kilometer is 3/5 of a mile, how many miles are there in 10 kilometers? What is the square root of 36?

Sometimes, these tests include a general section that measures your mechanical abilities or measurement skills. For example, problems dealing with gear ratios or volume, area, and calculations can be found in this section. Often particular skills are tested. Typing speed, spelling, welding, blueprint reading, circuit repair, and computer applications are examples.

You have to remember that many people are competing for the same job. Tests are only part of the process by which an employer determines the best person to hire. Besides looking at test scores, an employer will consider your interview results, level of education, length of employment history, past accomplishments, and references to obtain a better idea of your skills and abilities.

Expect these tests before the interview. Interviewing is a time consuming and expensive process. An employer only wants to interview the top candidates.

Here are some helpful hints that may help you to be a top candidate:

- **Keep** your confidence, relax, and get a good night's sleep.
- **Read** each question carefully; questions may be tricky or complex to test your concentration.
- **Keep** your wits about you; do not panic if you are timed. If you do not know the answer to a problem, go to the next one. Some tests are not meant to be finished; this is a built-in stress factor.
- **Do** your best, and do not leave the room looking defeated. Employers watch for applicants with positive outlooks.

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The Job-Search Diary: Your Map To Success

Competition is fierce, and job hopefuls need to establish an edge over the competition. To increase your chances for success in your job search, you must be organized. One tool you can use to achieve this goal is a job-search diary.

Function

The job-search diary is a valuable part of your job campaign. In fact, this diary is similar to a map. It shows where you are; it shows where you have been; and it provides information that is needed to get you to your intended destination--securing employment. The diary is a tool that is used to help you stay organized and establish a game plan.

Contents

When you start to organize your job-search diary, you should :

- **List** potential employers' names, titles, addresses, and telephone numbers. Also, include the names and titles of all staff members at each company (secretaries or personnel representatives) who you have met.
- **Show** the date and time of completion for all written communications (resumes, cover letters, and thank-you letters) and verbal communications (telephone inquiries and follow-up calls). Keep track of when the information was sent and what organizations you targeted in each mailing.
- **Write** notes to remind yourself when to make follow-up calls (three to five days after you submit a resume/cover letter), and to send thank-you notes (the same day you complete a job interview).
- **Record** any networking information that you may have obtained. (Talk to friends, relatives, and acquaintances. They may be aware of job openings, or they could give you the names of employers you can contact and send your resume.)
- **Be** certain to record all useful information that you obtain during conversations with potential employers and their staff. Examples include names, titles, telephone numbers, dates, background information on a company, good/bad times to call, and information about the job openings and job requirements. This information can be used to show the potential employer that you have done your homework. An employer will be more impressed with an individual who has conducted research and who has a basic knowledge of the company's operations.

Formats

Job-search information for your diary can be recorded in a notebook, calendar, or daily planner. If you have access to a computer, it can serve as an excellent way to maintain your job-search information. For some individuals, a combination of several formats (i.e., notebook and daily planner) is more effective. Experiment with different formats, and try to find a system that is comfortable for you. (See the STUDENTaccesspage for formatting ideas.)

Once again, remember that seeking employment is a full-time job. The job-search diary is an efficient method that will help you to establish your daily, weekly, and monthly plan of attack, improve your organizational skills, and keep you on the right track.

Reducing Stress With The Right Attitude

Deadlines can create high levels of stress for employees. So, what can employees do to alleviate stress and maintain their health and productivity?

One solution is for employees to make an effort to create the right atmosphere. A positive attitude is contagious and is just as beneficial to the sender (you) as it is to the receiver (coworkers).

Here are suggestions to help you combat stress in the workplace:

- **Make** an effort to listen when someone needs to vent his/her frustrations.
- **Give** compliments such as: "Hey! Great job!"
- **Tell** an occasional and appropriate joke. Humor, when used at the right times, can be wonderful medicine.
- **Smile**. (Don't underestimate this one.)
- **Understand** your coworkers' concerns. You don't always have to agree, but always let your coworkers know their opinions are important.

Although these suggestions may seem trivial, in the long run, they will add up to increased productivity and a more enjoyable workplace.

STUDENTaccesspage Focus: Sample Job-Search Diary

Position Available: *Administrative Assistant* **Date:** *(From: 2-12- 92 to)*

Company	Address	Telephone Number(s)
XZY Unlimited	*123 Wilbury Avenue, Newtowne, PA 19999*	*(412) 999-9991*

Names/Titles Of Contacts
(Manager, Personnel Director, or Interviewer)

Mr. Richard Tandy, Department Supervisor
(Mr. Tandy referred me to Mr. Lynne)

✓ *Mr. Jeff Lynne, Personnel Director*
(He conducts all interviews for XYZ Unlimited.)

Names/Titles Of Contacts
(Support Staff - Secretary or Personnel Department)

Ms. Bonnie Railte, Receptionist
(Referred me to Mr. Tandy)

Written Communication
(Include Dates)

- *Sent resume and cover letter on Wednesday, February 12, 1992. The information was sent to Mr. Jeff Lynne.*
- *Gave Mr. Lynne a copy of my reference list (past employers, coworkers, and business associates).*
- *Thank you letter was sent Wednesday, February, 19, 1992. (The same day of the interview)*

Verbal Communication
Content of Conversations (Include Dates)

- *On Wednesday, February 12, 1992, I talked to the Receptionist about the position advertised in the Sunday paper; she referred me to Mr. Tandy.*
- *Contacted Mr. Tandy on Wednesday, February 12, 1992. He gave me Mr. Lynne's name and suggested I send my material to him.*
- *Contacted Mr. Lynne four days after I sent my resume. I asked him if he had a chance to review my resume, and I asked him for an interview at his convenience.*
- *Interview scheduled for Wednesday, February 19, 1992, at 9:00 a.m.*
- *Had an interview on Wednesday, February 19, 1992. (I believe that it went well!) I asked Mr. Lynne if I could contact him in a week. He complimented me on my assertiveness.*

Follow-Up To Be Made

✓ *Call Mr. Lynne on Wednesday, February 26, 1992. Remind him of my skills and strengths and how I can benefit XYZ Unlimited. Emphasize that I am still interested in pursuing a career at this organization. Also, I must remember to mention my sincere interest in the new project that was highlighted during the interview.*

Miscellaneous

- *XYZ Unlimited is an Advertising Agency.*
- *The company was founded in 1972. Forty-two individuals are employed at XYZ Unlimited.*
- ✓ *The best time to call Mr. Lynne is between 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. (Monday through Friday).*

Trends In Technology

Tomorrow's Workplace?

Throw away your railroad pass. Disband the car pool. Cash in your subway tokens. Americans are staying home in droves...to work. If staying home for recreation was the major personal trend of the 1980s, then "telecommuting" might be called the comparable business trend of the 1990s. Growing businesses across the country are jumping on the bandwagon.

In fact, it is predicted that by 1992, more than 30 million Americans will be part of a work-at-home business, and these numbers are expected to multiply dramatically by the turn of the century. Technology is driving the telecommuting phenomenon (conducting work on the telephone, with fax machines, and with computers), and it's changing the nature of the American workplace.

Studies show productivity improves when employees have the flexibility to change the work environment as needed. Sometimes it is better to stay at home and battle the project on a computer instead of battling the traffic on a freeway. Also, with electronic mail (sending and receiving messages through the use of a computer), you can be only seconds away from the office.

The power to telecommunicate is the power to take greater control of your daily responsibilities. Boundaries of time and space disappear. The reality of the marketplace is that it is no longer a 9 to 5 world. Telecommuting gives you the ability to creatively use resources in ways that keep you ahead of the game.

Adapted from MCI Connections

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

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PASSAGE
"Your Workplace and Job Skills Information Newsletter"
October 1991

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PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 3 **November 1991**

Writing Tips for Today's Versatile Employee

Writing letters, reports, and other workplace documents is an acquired skill. As an employee, you may have to periodically write documents (even if it's not one of your regular day-to-day job duties) to clients, prospective customers, and even coworkers.

To write business documents, you have to consider your reading audience and what response you hope to receive from them. The manner in which you use and organize words, sentences, and ideas is important as you learn to write effectively.

Here are guidelines that can help you improve your documents:

- **Proofread** your materials and always have another individual review your materials before they are completed.
- **Pay** close attention to the accuracy of dates, dollar figures, and other information that contains numbers. You wouldn't want to misplace a decimal point.
- **Check** your documents for words and ideas that are overly repetitive. Keep it short and simple and eliminate excess words.
- **Get** your message across to the reader in the first (introductory) paragraph. The reader should know what the document is about when he/she has finished reading the first paragraph. (Be sure to answer: Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How.)
- **Avoid** words, phrases, or sentences that can be misunderstood by the reader.
- **Create** a writing style that fits your company's image while keeping your own unique approach to writing (Work at it; it takes time.)
- **Keep** your dictionary and thesaurus nearby. They are your friends; never let them leave your side when you are writing.

Resume-Writing Series

What To Include In Your Resume

Many of us dread the idea of composing a resume, but with the following basic guidelines, your resume can be an impressive advertisement of yourself.

Your Resume Should Include:

- Name, address, and telephone number
- Job objective or career goal
- Educational history (degrees, certificates, courses, and accomplishments)
- Work history (skills/experience)
- Work-related honors or achievements
- Any knowledge of foreign languages that you may have
- Ability to travel or relocate
- A listing of career-related activities or hobbies (show your diversity)
- Military service (if any)
- Security clearance (if any)

Your Resume Should Not Include:

- Reasons for leaving past jobs
- References (names and addresses)
- Past salaries or present salary requirements
- Your photograph
- Information about your age, height, weight, marital status, or health status

Focus: Resume Work Sheet

To help you organize and prepare your resume, use this work sheet to write basic information about yourself. When you are finished, use this work sheet to assemble your resume. Additional work space for some sections will be needed.

Name:_____

Address (Include street, city, state, and zip code):

_____

_____

_____

Home Phone:_____
(Include area code.)

Business Phone:_____
Your option; be careful. (Include area code.)

Job Objective: The job objective briefly describes what type of job you are seeking and what you can contribute to the potential employer (skills, strengths, and experience). _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Educational History (School/location, courses, area of study, and dates): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Employment History (List your most recent employment first--reverse chronological order.)

Name of Company:_____

_____

Address of Company:_____

_____

_____

Job Title:_____

Dates - From: _____ (month/year) To: _____ (month/year)

Description of Responsibilities:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Misc. (Personal Information, Major Achievements, and Associations): _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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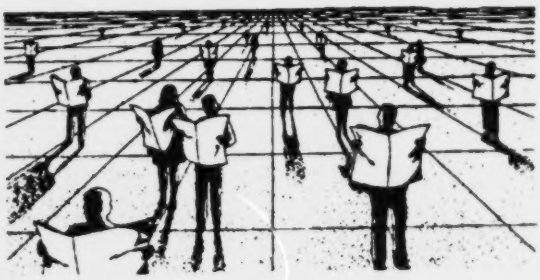
PSAs and Success Stories: Taking Advantage of Free Publicity



Does your organization take advantage of free publicity and marketing opportunities?

In these tough economic times, you will find that many of your local and regional radio and television stations and newspapers are happy to provide, free of charge, broadcast time or print space for nonprofit organizations to make announcements.

Here's how you begin:

1. **Study** how your fellow organizations advertise their programs and services in the media. Cut out of the paper public-service announcements (PSAs) which you feel gained your attention either because they were effective or poor examples of outreach. Emulate the good examples, and use the poor advertisements to remind you of what not to do when writing your public-service announcements.

2. **Call or write** to your newspaper, television, and radio representatives and ask them if they accept public-service announcements. Request a copy of their guidelines for submitting materials. *If they do not have specific written guidelines, ask them the following questions:*

- **How** long (number of words) can our PSA be?
- **Are** there specific deadlines for dated announcements?
- **What** format do you prefer?
- **What** department receives PSAs, and to whom should the PSA be addressed?

3. **Make** a public-relations' list of all newsletters, newspapers, and radio and television stations that accept PSAs. Send a personalized copy of your announcement to each of them.

4. **Be sure** to recognize in your PSA the funding source(s) which permit you to operate your career-guidance program. Check with your funding source(s) to see how they would like this information presented to the public.

5. **Review** your PSA for mistakes in sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Always check any numbers that appear in your PSA for errors (e.g., dates, time schedules, addresses, and phone numbers).

Here is a PSA example for you to follow:

Public Service Announcement
For Immediate Release 1/5/92
Contact: Linda Smith

New Midland Job Club Seeks Members

The Midland Center, Inc., 617 Midland Avenue, Midland, Pennsylvania, is recruiting unemployed adults who would like to join a Job Club. The Job Club, supported by funds from XYZ Corporation, will begin offering job-search assistance on January 22, 1992.

Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to noon, new Job Club members will receive help with writing resumes, completing applications, and conducting interviews.

If you are unemployed and have little or no chance to return to your former place of work, call 566-1222 for more information. There are no membership fees or costs for materials and supplies; however, Job Club membership will be limited to fifty (50) adults.

###

6. **Check** your PSA to see if it answers the most important questions about your program and services: Who, What, Where, When, How, How Many, and How Much.

7. **Send** PSAs to local media on a regular schedule. According to many advertising firms, most people need to see your organization's name and services on several occasions before there is special recognition.

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Those Powerful Success Stories

Never underestimate the power of a success story. One of the most effective outreach and recruitment strategies involves the use of success stories. If a student from your organization finds employment with your assistance, you may want to ask him/her to serve as a role model for others. Most students who find employment are anxious to help you recruit others into your career-development program. Be sure that the individuals being interviewed have a clear understanding of how you plan to use their story to reach and recruit other students for your program.

The interview format is always an excellent method of highlighting the success stories for the public. You can write questions which the individuals being interviewed can review in order to prepare their responses.

When you write these questions, word them so that you are asking the more common questions that are most likely on the minds of others who have not yet sought your services. The following questions are examples to use:

- **What** made you decide to join TMCI's Job Club?
- **How** did you feel when you first came to the Job Club?
- **What** were the benefits of Job Club membership?
- **Why** should others seek help through the Job Club?

There are many more excellent questions for the success-story interview and more diverse ways of wording them. However, always outline your questions so that the interviewees are comfortable answering you and more likely to relate the information you need to recruit others to the program.

Once success-story interviews are completed, type them using a question and answer format. In addition, include pictures which complement the interviews. Finally, map out another outreach and recruitment strategy using these completed interview packages.

Send the completed interviews to your local newspaper(s). Many small newspaper companies, being short staffed, will print your interview with little or no editing. Other newspapers may decide to send a reporter and photographer to your organization for more information about your program and the success-story candidates.

Another way to use these powerful success stories is to prepare a special booklet which you can distribute in outreach and recruitment situations such as those provided in libraries and at social club meetings. Also, your organization should have written approval from former students to use their names, information, and pictures in these situations. You should consult someone who understands how release forms can best be worded to avoid any misunderstandings between your organization, the individuals interviewed, and the intended use of the information gathered for outreach and recruitment.

PASSAGE's Humor Hunt

Reader's Digest (9/91) reprinted dialogue by Kermit Moore in *American Way*. We hope you enjoy our latest humor hunt winner, Kermit Moore, as he presents a new employee's dilemma.

The new employee stood before the paper shredder looking confused.

"Need some help?" a secretary, walking by, asked.

"Yes," he replied, "how does this thing work?"

"Simple," she said, taking the fat report from his hand and feeding it into the shredder.

"Thanks, but where do the copies come out?"

In the same issue of *Reader's Digest*, our PASSAGE Humor Hunt also revealed ten wonderful poetic lines from Richard Armour who had written this piece for the *Wall Street Journal*. We hope you enjoy **One for the Seesaw.**

One for the Seesaw

This I have never understood:
We chop down trees but chop up wood;
We draw down wrath, we draw up wills,
We run down foes, we run up bills;
We eat food up, we down a drink,
Which is a little strange, I think.
We turn down offers, turn up noses--
Just one last thought and then this closes:
We should remember, we poor clowns,
That life is full of ups and downs.

Workplace-Literacy Programs: Key Components

Defining A Philosophy

Every workplace-literacy program needs a philosophy. The most widely accepted philosophy includes the key principle of relevance--that is, adult learners should be able to relate what they are learning in the classroom to the tasks they perform on the job or in their personal lives. Even the most abstract learning concepts become more recognizable when you find ways to give adults basic applications they can recognize.

If you are involved in teaching workplace-literacy students, you should study their workplace responsibilities. By doing so, you will learn how to apply textbook knowledge to the workplace. Your students can help you in this learning process by assuming the instructor's role. Give them time to explain what they do at work and how they accomplish their tasks. This practice of teacher-student reversal will help you find ways to make academic skills more relevant to the students' performance on the job.

Analytical thinking and problem solving are important skills which employers value in their employees. There is a need for employees to analyze problems and produce solutions that improve their quality, health, productivity, and safety on the job. Workers should be able to read, write, do mathematical computations, and speak well in order to meet workplace demands. As a workplace literacy instructor, you have the opportunity to encourage employees to improve their analytical and problem-solving skills through relevant learning experiences.

Seeking Cooperation

Labor and management cooperation is imperative to the success of any workplace literacy program. There is no substitute strategy for ongoing discussion among the key decision makers within the organization. Key decision makers include everyone involved in the education and training program, including the workers themselves. This is important whenever the extent of the workplace-literacy problem is being identified.

Most often, the joint-decision makers can help you conduct surveys and interviews that yield important information about what the employees identify as their workplace-literacy training needs. Basic academic tests and employee/employment data can also give you insight into the scope of literacy problems which can be solved through constructive workplace curriculums.

You must recognize that even with the best cooperation among all parties, there will be elements of distrust and suspicion among workers who fear job loss should they be identified as candidates for a workplace-literacy program. You may want to minimize their stress by mainstreaming them in to classes with managers who have voluntarily and publicly admitted similar academic/performance deficiencies; however, you must realize that you may never dispel every workplace-literacy student's fear of reprisal for participation in your classes. You can only respect their feelings and anticipate that time and success within the classroom will override their anxieties.

Selecting Baseline Curriculums

You already have learned that workers comprehend and retain written materials that are relevant to their responsibilities. You can use basic reading concepts and skills that are easily applied to written materials used on the job.

The identification of main ideas and supporting details can be used to better understand training manuals, health and safety information, and directions for equipment operation. The practice of making accurate inferences from reading materials can be encouraged by explaining how context clues, further knowledge, and research can help workers draw conclusions about what they read.

An understanding of cause and effect is also important to workplace performance. Workers can define how their work performance affects the work performance of their coworkers and ultimately affects the success of the organization. You have the opportunity, when discussing cause and effect, to demonstrate that effective teamwork requires individual and group cooperation.

Also, access to new vocabulary words gives workers better ways to express themselves. You can help workers acquire words and definitions that are relevant to the tasks they perform. This does not mean that you instruct them to learn multi-syllabic words that can be substituted for more concrete, understandable terms.

Give them a choice. If they prefer or need more technical

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terms to do their jobs more effectively, you can promote learning by showing them that there are many acceptable ways to express concepts or ideas.

If math skills are relevant to the success of your workplace literacy students, you may want to begin with a review of basic mathematical computations. Adults will often relate that they can add, subtract, multiply, and divide--with the help of a calculator. You can take them through some pencil and paper exercises that require them to compute without the calculator. Most adults, after some review, are prepared to tackle more complex computations using fractions, decimals, and percentages. You can also introduce them to statistical-analysis methods for defining and projecting work-related data.

Soliciting Ongoing Feedback and Evaluation

Teaching in a workplace-literacy program offers many rewards and challenges. You can be a successful instructor if you recognize that adults respond to learning that is relevant to their work and personal lives. The best way to assess your teaching style and technique is to utilize feedback and evaluations provided by your students. You can request formal feedback through classroom evaluation forms and/or make observations based on how well your workplace-literacy students are learning the material and responding to your teaching style.

Business Correspondence

Understanding the Importance of Grammar Rules

Whether you have speaking engagements or writing responsibilities, you need to always find ways to improve your communication style and knowledge of the English language. Zacharias Rosner, founder of The Grammar Group, a Chicago-based company, offers you some basic grammar and language-usage rules to follow whenever your job requires that you communicate with customers and coworkers. *Here are his top-10 grammatical errors:*

1. **The use of the word myself.** I or me is sufficient when referring to your actions or thoughts. I did my work instead of I did my work myself.

2. **Never write or say *between* you and I.** The proper word here is me.

3. **Remember how to use the words fewer and less.** If you can count items, use fewer. The checkout counter should read: 10 items or fewer.

4. **Irregardless is nonstandard English.** Regardless is the appropriate word choice.

5. **Do you really feel badly?** Unless you are complaining about your poor sense of touch, you probably just feel bad.

6. **Something will happen on February 12th.** Mr. Rosner says that when the day follows the month, omit the th. February 12 is correct.

7. **Capitol and capital are often confused.** A capitol is a building; other usages involve the word capital.

8. **Stationary or stationery: which is correct?** Mr. Rosner gives us a tip to remember. Pens, letters, and envelopes all have *E*s and *S*s; when you use them your are using *s*tation*e*ry.

9. **Did you imply or infer that I did not understand you?** Imply means to hint or suggest, while infer means to conclude, surmise, or assume. When you imply, you send a message; when you infer, you receive one.

10. **Are a group of employees meeting after work?** No. A group of employees is meeting after work. The word group is a collective noun and requires the use of the singular verb is.

If you have weak grammar skills, perhaps you should borrow a grammar text and learn more about avoiding errors that will hamper your communication style. The more you study and use correct grammar, the more confident you will become when asked to speak or write on the job.

***An Excellent Resource For You:** Eighth Edition of Practical English Handbook by Watkins/Dillingham*

This handbook provides additional practice in mastering grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, mechanics, diction and style, and paragraphs.

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

Social Work - The Caring and Helping Profession

"When even one person is a victim of loneliness, hunger, discrimination, poor housing or clothing, domestic violence, or emotional upset, there is a need for social work," -- Armando Morales and Bradford W. Sheafor, authors of **Social Work--A Profession of Many Faces**. If you are interested in helping individuals improve the overall quality of their lives, then perhaps a career in social work is worth researching and considering.

To better understand this career field, PASSAGE had the opportunity to interview Donna Young, a Caseworker in the Acute Care Psychiatric Inpatient Unit at Aliquippa Hospital Mental-Health Services in Rochester, Pennsylvania. Ms. Young has a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work from Slippery Rock University and is currently working on a Master's in Social Work at West Virginia University.

What are your day-to-day responsibilities?

In general, I am responsible for a caseload of 15 to 20 clients a day. While I am not a doctor or a therapist, I do meet with clients on a one-to-one basis and listen to their problems. Listening is an essential part of a caseworker's job. When meeting with the clients, I encourage them and help them through the entire process. This process involves introducing clients to our staff which includes doctors, therapists, nurses, and other caseworkers. The staff works together to create a safe environment for the clients and to help them with their problems.

Another important responsibility is meeting with the patient's family members. I educate the family members about illnesses/treatments, explain what they can expect, and provide support during times of difficulty.

I also contact other agencies that may assist in helping the patients receive specialized care. Examples include drug and alcohol services and personal-care homes. So, part of my job is to refer the patients to the appropriate services.

In addition, I must keep accurate records of my meetings with clients, family members, other agencies, and staff members. Records are needed to chart each patient's progress and establish accountability. Because of all the communication that is involved with the job, there is a great deal of paper work.

What are the different specialized areas in which social workers can assist individuals in need?

In addition to the mental-health field, social work can be found in a variety of specialized areas which include mental retardation, aging, child welfare, substance abuse, pregnancy-crisis centers, family services/counseling, crime and delinquency, disability and physical handicap, health services, youth programs, community/neighborhood services, housing, and homemaker services. While this is not a complete list, it can provide you with an idea of what type of clients or populations social workers assist.

Although there are a variety of specialized areas in the field of social work, each social worker's function or responsibility remains the same. The social worker must use his/her knowledge, skills, values, and resources to help create positive change.

What type of educational training is needed?

A Bachelor's Degree in Social Work or a related helping profession such as Psychology is usually required for entry-level positions in social work. Typically, four years (full-time) are needed to obtain this training. If you are interested in this career, be sure that the school of your choice is accredited by the state. This means that graduates from these schools are adequately prepared for entry-level positions in social work.

Two year Associate of Arts degrees are available from community colleges; however, these degrees place great limitations on the graduate (where they can work and job duties). The two-year degree could serve as a starting point for individuals interested in this career, but a four-year degree should eventually be obtained.

In fact, a master's degree in social work has become a requirement for social workers

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wanting to advance in this career field to become supervisors, consultants, or therapists.

In addition, experience and knowledge are helpful for obtaining employment. Volunteer work can help you decide if this career is right for you, and it will help you gain work experience.

What are you required to learn in college?
Course requirements include introduction to social work, psychology (understanding human behavior), methods (dealing with individuals, groups, and communities), and statistics (the ability to understand the meaning and results of studies). A good college program will have volunteer activities and internship/field placement for students to receive credit for hands-on experience. Also, basic courses such as writing, speaking, social science, math, and science are required by four-year colleges, and they play an important part in your success in this field.

What type of person is best suited for this career?
An individual who wants to be successful in this career field should be outgoing, caring, flexible, honest, and able to listen. A sense of humor and the ability to deal with stress are extremely important. Additionally, solid writing skills (preparing reports and records) and presentation skills (speaking with staff, families, agencies, and patients) are necessary.

What are the rewards of working in this profession?
You can make a difference no matter how small it may be. Being able to help people in a time of crisis is a great feeling. There is a sense of accomplishment when a patient is feeling better and back on the right track.

If someone were interested in this field, where could they obtain information?
Contact area colleges and ask for the social work department, or call one of your local social service agencies. Find out what education is required for employment and what college programs are the best suited to your interests. Also, make the effort to get involved in volunteer work. Experience coupled with an education will improve your chances for employment.

What is the general salary range for individuals starting in this profession?
In Pennsylvania, the salary range is $12,000-$18,000 a year for an individual with a bachelor's degree in social work. The main motivation for individuals entering this profession should be the desire to use their talents to help others in need.

Any advice for people interested in this career field?
Understand that the availability of jobs in social work shifts at different times, but the need for social workers will always be present. Know that it is a field that is always changing. It's not the same thing day-to-day. Make furthering your education a life long commitment, earn your degree, attend conferences, and obtain certificates. Finally, become involved in volunteer work. It will expand your network and will provide valuable experience. Volunteer experience, along with my education, helped me obtain employment with Aliquippa Hospital Mental-Health Services.

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PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 4 December 1991

Meeting Deadline Pressures

Whether you are attending school, working at your job, conducting a job search, or taking care of a family, you have to deal with deadlines on a daily basis.

Some common examples of deadlines include studying for a final exam, organizing a report for your boss, or contacting potential employers for an upcoming job opening.

As we all know, these constant deadlines can be quite stressful. *However, by using the following guidelines, you can learn to reduce stress and to manage the many pressures of meeting deadlines:*

- **Set** priorities. Communicate to coworkers, family, or friends that the deadline on a particular task or assignment is more important (at this time) than your other responsibilities. Then people can understand and work with you, or they can focus their energies in different areas.
- **Avoid** deadline changes whenever possible. Deadlines--when they become negotiable or too flexible--lose their effectiveness.
- **Commit** only to realistic deadlines. Don't set a date for a deadline based on what you'd like to do; set one based on what you can do.
- **Consider** a series of shorter deadlines instead of one big one. Break a project into smaller tasks. This approach will make the project seem less intimidating.
- **Allow** some time after the deadline has been met (if possible) to relax. People need to physically and emotionally relax.
- **Praise** people who work with you to meet a deadline and plan a celebration if it's in order.

Adapted from Employee Relations and Human Resources Bulletin, 24 Rope Ferry Road, Waterford, CT 06386.

Seeking Employment

In *"The Ultimate Interview,"* business consultant and author John Caple offers three basic but tragically overlooked rules on finding work that is right for you.

Caple's suggestions include:

Rule Number 1: Use contacts to get your foot in the door. Most jobs are found through people you've met and through connections--networking.

Rule Number 2: Know as much as you can about the company you're approaching. It's basic advice, yet it is often ignored.

Rule Number 3: Value your potential. Be sure to promote yourself. Be persistent about any job that you really want.

Adapted from "Author Tells How To Go After Job You Like," Sally Vallongo, Block News Alliance.

Occupational Outlook Handbook

Are you conducting a job search? Contemplating a career change? Deciding whether to enroll in college? If so, what research are you conducting?

When you are planning a major change in your life, it is wise to research your options. One book that can make your research easier is the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. The handbook, published yearly by the U.S. Department of Labor, can be found in the career section of most libraries.

The handbook is arranged in a logical manner and is simple to use. For example, the table of contents has a Special Features section that highlights topics such as how to understand what is in the handbook, how to find information leads, how to locate state and local job-outlook information, and how to access other related resources.

In addition, to assist you in finding the appropriate information for a given career, the table of contents is arranged under the following headings:

- Executive, Administrative, and Managerial
- Professional Specialty (including subheadings such as Engineer, Lawyer, Scientist, and Teacher)
- Technicians and Related Support Occupations
- Marketing and Sales
- Administrative Support (including Clerical)
- Service Occupations
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Related Occupations
- Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers
- Construction Trades and Extractive Occupations
- Production
- Transportation and Material Moving
- Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, and Laborers
- Job Opportunities in the Armed Forces

If you have difficulty finding a particular occupation under the given headings, there is an index in the back of the book which lists all of the occupations alphabetically.

Once you have located a career that sounds interesting to you, the book provides a thorough introduction and description that explains what an individual interested in a particular career field can prepare for and expect.

Here are the many areas addressed:

1. **The nature of the work** - This section explains typical tasks of a particular occupation, tools or equipment used, type of supervision, the final product, and advances in the field.

2. **Working conditions** - A description of the physical environment and the working hours is provided.

3. **Number of people employed in this occupation**- This section indicates how many jobs there are in this occupation and how they are distributed throughout the United States.

4. **Training, other qualifications, and advancement** - Information on the different types of educational experience a job may require and on whether a person will eventually have to obtain more education to keep the position is listed.

5. **Job outlook** - This section indicates what factors (economic, social, national defense, etc.) will affect employment in this occupation until the year 2000.

6. **Earnings** - The salary ranges and benefit packages a person may attain working in each specific occupation are provided.

7. **Related occupations** - Lists that highlight several occupations similar to your chosen occupation are provided. Also, requirements for each position such as education and training, interests, and aptitudes are given.

8. **Sources of additional information** - This section provides the names and addresses of organizations that can offer you additional career-related information.

If you are planning your professional future, consider conducting occupational research--it is an important step towards finding the career you'll love.

Putting The Pieces Together

Which Resume Style Is Right For You?

Hopefully you have followed the Resume-Writing Series up to this point and are familiar with how an employer uses a resume, how to get the employer's attention, and what information to include in your resume. (If not, please review PASSAGE's Special Job Search Edition and the October 1991 and November 1991 issues).

So, you have a basic idea of what information is important to the employer when he/she evaluates a resume. Also, you have written a rough draft of what you want to include in your resume.

Now you are ready to put all of the pieces together and to write your resume. However, before you prepare a final copy of your resume, let's look at two resume formats that you can follow.

Although there are many different ways to organize your resume, the two most widely used and successful resume formats are the chronological resume and the functional resume. Both have different approaches that are designed to:

- **Get** the employer's attention
- **Focus** on your strengths and abilities
- **Advertise** the most positive aspects of your employability

Many factors such as work experience, changing careers, employment history, education, and reentry into the workplace affect your choice of a resume format. The following explanations will help you to decide which format is best for you and your job search.

Chronological Resume

The chronological (order of events/dates) resume format is used by individuals who have practical work experience and have an established career. This format is not recommended for individuals who lack career-related work experience, have been unemployed for a long period of time, have done a considerable amount of job hopping (i.e., five different jobs in four years), have decided on a career change, or have just completed school/training.

The chronological resume is designed to highlight your many on-the-job accomplishments and responsibilities. In addition, previous employers, employers' addresses, dates of employment, and job titles are listed. Be sure to list your most recent employer first and continue to go backwards (reverse order) for any other employer listings. (See page four.) The same steps should be followed for any educational experience or training you may have received.

When using this format, be certain that you sell your past work achievements/experiences and show how they directly relate to the position you are targeting. The chronological resume should give the employer a solid idea of your accomplishments, abilities, experience, qualifications, and career goals.

Page four provides an example of a chronological resume. This resume will provide you with a better understanding of how to construct this type of resume. Also, a detailed description and evaluation of each section of the resume are given on page six.

Functional Resume

The functional resume format is used by individuals who are interested in finding a new career direction, entering the job market for the first time, reentering the job market after a long absence, or leaving the military.

The main purpose of this format is to focus the employer's attention on your skills, talents, and abilities. Take your present knowledge (even if you think it's not job specific) and show how it relates to the position you are seeking. At the same time, place less attention on your past experience, job titles, employers, and dates of employment. This information is not removed from your resume; however, it should not be emphasized in the resume. In this format, information that does not focus on your skills, talents, and abilities should be placed at the end of the resume.

Be careful when designing a resume in this format. The employer may become concerned if information such as previous work history is not included in the resume. He/she may feel that you are trying to hide something. The functional resume is not designed to lie to the employer. It is designed to focus attention on your more marketable areas and to focus less attention on your work history.

Page five contains an example of a functional resume. Pay close attention to the way the information is presented and what methods are used to attract the employer. Also, a detailed description and evaluation of each section in this style of resume are provided on page seven.

Sample Resume #1 - The Chronological Resume

Lisa Simpson
102 Homer Drive
Springfield, Pennsylvania 91919
(919) 919-9191

Objective

To obtain a position in Sales that will utilize my skills and experience and provide opportunity for growth.

Experience

Sales Representative
The Home Improvements Company, Springfield, PA — July 1988 to Present

Responsibilities and duties include:

- Contacting potential customers and selling home improvement products and services to customers.
- Assisting in the development of new strategies to increase sales and customer awareness.
- Writing weekly sales reports for the district office.
- Organizing lists of potential customers, addresses, and telephone numbers on a computer data-base program.
- Scheduling appointments and meeting with interested clients on- and off-site.

Achievements include:

- Salesperson of the Year (1990)
- Exceeded my yearly sales goal by at least 50% during each year of employment.

Salesperson
Alon Beauty Products, Newtowne, PA — May 1986 to July 1988

Responsibilities and duties included:

- Selling beauty products door-to-door and educating the customer.
- Distributing catalogs and brochures door-to-door.
- Organizing home beauty gatherings at interested clients' homes.
- Establishing a solid relationship with customers which resulted in excellent repeat business.
- Creating a solid game plan for marketing the products.

Achievements included:

- Alon Sales Recognition Award (1987)
- Increased personal sales by 80% in second year of employment.

Education

Springfield Community College
Associate Degree in Business (In Progress)

Springfield Center for Adult Education and Training — April 1986
High School Diploma/GED Studies Program

Activities/Community Involvement

- Non-Traditional Student Representative, Student Government Association, Springfield Community College
- Fund-Raising Sponsor, Girl Scouts of America, District 38

References Available Upon Request

Important: See page 6 for more information.

Sample Resume #2 - The Functional Resume

Barbara Flanders
129 Capital Avenue
Springfield, Pennsylvania 91919
(919) 919-9191

Objective

To obtain a position in Sales that will utilize my public-contact skills and training and provide opportunity for growth.

Career-Related Skills/Strengths

Communication

- Possess solid writing and public-speaking skills.
- Can speak effectively to groups or in a one-to-one situation.

Planning/Time Management

- Able to set goals and meet strict deadlines.
- Capable of developing personal strategies for selling products and services.
- Comfortable with maintaining a complex schedule with many deadlines.

Motivation

- Produce positive results in work settings that are self-directed or team-oriented.
- Provide the extra effort needed to meet and exceed goals.
- Motivate others by setting a good example and meeting the employer's expectations.

Problem-Solving

- Rely on personal creative abilities to find new approaches and to eliminate obstacles.
- Utilize techniques such as brainstorming and management by objectives to increase effectiveness on the job.

Education

Springfield Center for Adult Education and Training
High School Diploma/GED Studies Program — April 1989

Specialized areas of interest and training included:

- Intensive writing
- Public speaking
- Math skills that can be applied to the workplace

Experience

Tutor Trainer — 1990 to Present
Volunteers In Service To America, Springfield, PA

Activities/Community Involvement

- Fund-Raising Sponsor, Girl Scouts of America, District 38
- Job-Club Member, Springfield Center for Adult Education and Training

References Available Upon Request

Important: See page 7 for more information.

A Closer Look at Sample Resumes #1 and #2

Let's review the different sections included in the chronological resume and the functional resume and look at what information each resume is revealing to the employer.

Sample Resume #1 - The Chronological Resume

Contact Information

This section should always include your name, address, and telephone number(s). Make it easy for the employer to get in touch with you.

Objective

The objective is one or two sentences that explain what type of position you are seeking and what you can contribute to the potential employer. Because Sample #1 is a chronological resume and Lisa Simpson has work experience, the objective highlights her current skills and experience. In Ms. Simpson's case, her experience (job specific) is a major selling point, and she wants the person reviewing the resume to be aware of this strength.

Experience

This section should list previous employers, company locations (city and state), dates of employment, responsibilities, duties, and achievements. This information should be in reverse order, starting with the most recent employment experience. As mentioned above, Ms. Simpson's best approach is to sell her job experience and show how it directly relates to the position she is targeting. In writing this résume, she reviewed all of her skills/responsibilities and listed all of the examples that she felt would be important to a new employer. Her resume clearly states that she has solid communication, organizational, creative, and problem-solving skills, and it mentions her achievements on the job. Also, she effectively uses short bullets (example statements) to give the employer effective examples of her experience, skills, and background.

Education

In the education section, you should include educational experience such as high school/GED, college, or vocational training. Also, the name of the school, type of degree or certificate, and attendance dates should be included. In this resume, Ms. Simpson's work experience is a greater selling point than her education. If she had no practical work experience and had just completed college or a training school, this information might have appeared after the job objective. This resume shows that she has a high school diploma (this is important to employers). Also, it mentions that she is working on an Associate Degree in Business (which shows that she is interested in improving her skills).

Activities/Community Involvement

List all activities that can possibly relate to your career and show you are a responsible individual. In Sample Resume #1, both activities indicate responsibility, and they show that she is helping others and improving her job-related skills.

References

This section informs the employer that you have a list of individuals (managers, coworkers, instructors, or business associates) who can provide information of your skills and abilities. Also, it signals the end of the resume.

(Continued on page 7)

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Continued from page 6

Sample Resume #2 - The Functional Resume

Contact Information

As stated before, this section should always include your name, address, and telephone number(s). Again, make it easy for the employer to get in touch with you.

Objective

The objective is an important section in the functional resume. Because this style of resume focuses on skills, talents, and abilities and focuses less attention on experience, work history, and dates, the objective must be written for a specific job. In Sample Resume #2, Barbara Flanders (having little job-related work experience) states that she wants a Sales position and that she has public-contact skills and training. Remember, this section should be one or two sentences that explain what type of position you are seeking and what you can contribute to the potential employer.

Career-Related Skills/Strengths

This section should highlight all of the skills and strengths that are related to the position that you are targeting. Under this section, create subtopics that focus on your skills and strengths (at least three). In Sample Resume #2, Ms. Flanders creates four subtopics which were Communication, Planning/Time Management, Motivation, and Problem-Solving. She feels each subtopic is an important part of being a successful salesperson and is important to the employer. Also, she provides short example statements (bullets) which support each subtopic. These statements provide detailed examples of her skills, abilities, and talents. Ms. Flanders makes certain that every item listed in this section directly relates to the job she is seeking.

Education

Similar to the chronological resume, this section should include educational experience such as high school/GED, college, or vocational training. Also, the name of the school, type of degree or certificate, and attendance dates should be included. In Sample Resume #2, Ms. Flanders places more emphasis on her areas of interest and training in the education section. She has received specialized training in three areas that directly relate to her objective, and she wants to highlight this information. The resume shows how her educational training relates to this career field. Keep in mind that educational training is important to the employer.

Experience

In this section, the functional resume is quite different from the chronological resume. While job title, employer, location (city and state), and dates of employment are listed (year only), no examples of work experience and responsibilities are listed. Again, this resume format is designed for individuals who have not worked in the career field they are targeting. Skills, abilities, and talents should be listed under the Career-Related/Strengths and Education sections.

Activities/Community Involvement

The guidelines for this section of a functional resume are the same as the chronological resume. Although Ms. Flanders lacks practical work experience, her volunteer work and community involvement show the employer that she is willing to learn, network with others, and help the community. Because both examples in this section can be career related, she sends a very positive message to the potential employer.

References

The guidelines for the reference section of a functional resume are the same as for the chronological resume.

The editors of PASSAGE hope this issue and previous issues have been helpful in preparing your resume. If you have any questions, comments, or ideas about this topic, please call 1-800-345-5443. Also, we would like to thank all of the readers who have already provided valuable feedback for this series and other topics presented in PASSAGE. Thanks again!

Quotes

"A problem is a chance for you to do your best."

Duke Ellington

"Mistakes are the portals of discovery."

James Joyce

"What one great thing would you do if you knew you could not fail?"

Robert Schuller

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

STUDENTaccesspage Focus: Proofreading Your Resume

Wait! Don't mail your resume to employers just yet! Did you proofread your work? Make sure you and at least one other person check your work before it is sent to an employer. You wouldn't want any grammatical, content, or spelling errors to be included in your final draft.

To help you proofread your resume, use the following checklist to ensure that your hard work will be impressive and error free:

- ☐ **Have** you checked for spelling errors? Make sure your dictionary is nearby and pay close attention to the correct spelling of names. (Tip: Try reading your resume backwards and look for misspelled words only. It works--really!)
- ☐ **Is** your resume too long? Try to fit your resume on one page (no more than two pages).
- ☐ **Have** you included all of the information the employer needs to get in touch with you for an interview (name, address, and telephone number)?
- ☐ **Does** the information in your resume focus on your strengths (experience, skills, or ability) and show the employer how you can benefit his/her company?
- ☐ **Did** you choose the correct resume format (chronological or functional) for the job you are targeting? (If you are uncertain, review pages three through seven.)
- ☐ **Is** your resume easy to read? Each section of the resume (Objective, Experience, or Education) should be easy to access. The employer should be able to have a good understanding of your abilities in less than a minute.
- ☐ **Is** your educational and work history listed in reverse order (most recent employer or training listed first)?
- ☐ **Have** you eliminated any information that deals with your reason for leaving a job or with your past salaries?
- ☐ **Are** your sentences and paragraphs short and to the point? Avoid writing long sentences (no more than 22 words) and lengthy paragraphs (no more than three sentences).
- ☐ **Do** you have any volunteer experience that you can add to your resume? If you lack experience, this is an excellent way to get some hands-on experience and to meet people who can help you with your job search.

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Midland, Pa 15059

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PASSAGE
"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"
December 1991

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Networking Tips For Job Seekers.....Page 2
Attracting Volunteers.....Page 4
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PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 5 Special Issue–January 1992

"Where Are The Jobs?"

"I always read the classified advertisements in the daily newspaper, and I send out resumes every week. Why am I having such a difficult time finding employment?"

How would you answer this question? This is not an easy question to answer. Perhaps the best approach to answering this question would be to explore the many different ways a job seeker can learn about job openings.

The biggest mistake job seekers make when conducting a job search is to limit their possibilities or areas of exploration. The classified advertisement section in your newspaper is just one of many different sources of job leads. Other sources besides classified advertisements include the networking process, employment agencies, government agencies, volunteer work, job clubs, temporary services, job fairs, and personal investigation.

A truly successful job search is the result of focusing on several different areas (at the same time) that can generate job openings. When you are conducting a job search, ask yourself, "Am I using all the tools and resources that are available to me?"

Let's take a closer look at the different options that are available to job seekers wanting to discover new job leads:

Classified Advertisements

Unfortunately, statistics reveal that only 3% of all job openings are advertised in newspapers and publications. As you can see, limiting yourself to using only the classified advertisements can put you at a great disadvantage.

However, in addition to a listing of recent job openings, there is valuable information contained in the classified advertisement section of your newspaper. For example, employers often list job duties, salary expectations, and qualifications for employment. This information serves many purposes. It lets you know what the employer expects from new hires, what overall duties, experience, and responsibilities are required of individuals in your career field, and what salary range you can expect with your qualifications.

Also, become familiar with the titles that employers give to the position you are targeting. For example, public relations assistant can be listed as communications person, public-contact representative, or media representative.

Use classified advertisements for your job search, but make certain that it is not your only method of obtaining job leads. Be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of using the classified advertisement section of your newspaper.

Networking

Take a survey. Ask people you know how they obtained employment. What you will

Continued on page 2

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Continued from page 1

probably discover is that most of the people you talk with received their jobs through networking. Networking is probably the most effective tool for uncovering job openings and obtaining interviews.

Networking means "getting the word out." Let everyone know that you are looking for job leads. You can start by contacting family, friends, and neighbors. Prepare a list of everyone you know and keep expanding the list each week as you meet new people.

When networking, you ask people to keep their ears open for new job leads. The majority of job openings are not published. In fact, statistics reveal that 85% of all job openings are unpublished.

Often companies will announce a job opening to their employees before they decide to advertise or use other methods such as employment agencies. The advantage of networking is that you will know about an opening before it is announced to the general public. Also, the fact that you know somebody who works at the company that is hiring gives you a great advantage. An employer often feels more comfortable when a job candidate is referred by a valued employee. (Caution: Make certain the person who gives you a job lead is comfortable with you using his/her name. Always ask for permission before using someone's name as a reference.)

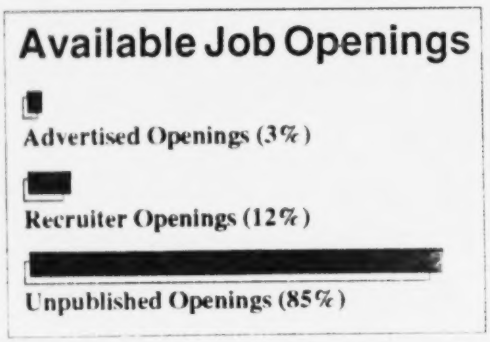
Always have your resume ready when you begin networking. If a friend or acquaintance mentions your availability to an interested employer, the employer will most likely ask for your resume. Getting your resume to the interested employer in an efficient manner will impress him/her.

Finally, networking techniques can be used to research companies and career fields. Your network of friends, relatives, and acquaintances can provide you with valuable knowledge that you can use to become more informed and prepared for your job search.

Start building your network today and keep in touch with everyone in your network on a regular basis. People will be happy to help you because, at some point in their lives, someone probably helped them obtain employment.

Employment Agencies

There are two basic types of employment agencies. They are the private employment agencies and the state and government employment agencies. (See next month's issue for a more detailed description of these agencies.)



The private employment agencies charge a fee for finding you a job. This type of agency will interview you, get your resume, and market you to potential employers. Employment agencies are in the business of finding you employment.

In some cases, an employer will cover the fee; however, you should be prepared to cover the cost. Be sure you read the contract and understand what your responsibilities are in this agreement. Caution: Never pay an employment agency before you actually receive employment. There are some unprofessional and misleading agencies out there.

The state and government employment agencies do not charge you a fee for their job-search assistance. These agencies are funded by the government and can be found in every county throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Visit the nearest employment office and meet with an employment counselor. The counselor will inform you about job openings and will explain to you the various job-search services that are available--free of charge.

One major similarity in both types of employment agencies is that they can provide you with valuable information on the current job market and on

Continued on page 3

Networking For Your Job Search

Meet people who can help you before you need them. Learn to be genuinely interested in other people. Always be polite. Follow up whenever someone gives you information or a name to call, and call back to let the person know how things worked out--people like being appreciated and knowing they've helped. Don't ask for favors, and don't keep count of who "owes" you. Keep in touch with people, and never stop building your contacts.

Belinda Plutx, partner, CareerMentors, New York, quoted in Successful Meetings, 633 Third Ave., New York 10017.

Continued from page 2

employer expectations. This information will help you market your skills/abilities more effectively. Check the help wanted section of your local newspaper or the Yellow Pages (look under--employment agencies) for a listing.

Temporary Services

Utilizing temporary services can be an important step towards finding employment. Although your goal may be to obtain a permanent job, you should consider the opportunities that temporary services can provide.

These services place individuals into temporary (short-term) positions at companies that need additional help for a brief period of time (e.g., several days or possibly several months). Many companies in today's business world contact temporary services for assistance when employees go on vacation or there is a short-term build-up of work.

The advantages of temporary services are many. For example, you can be working and still be looking for a permanent position. The time you spend as a temporary worker need not be wasted. You can use this opportunity to improve your skills, gain experience, and tap into a new network which includes your supervisors, coworkers, and business associates.

If you can impress your temporary employer, you open the door for consideration when a permanent position becomes available at the company. At the very least, you have a group of individuals who can let you know about job openings that are occurring in companies they do business with.

Another advantage includes the opportunity to work in different businesses and environments. This will help you to better focus your interests and realize your strengths while you gain experience and build a network.

Even though it's a possibility, don't use this approach expecting a temporary employer to hire you. However, you should be aware of the possibilities this approach can create for securing a permanent position somewhere. Check the help-wanted section of your local newspaper or the Yellow Pages (under employment agencies) for a listing.

Volunteer Work

Volunteer work could easily be included in the networking section, but it has unique qualities that deserve special attention.

Although many people are not interested in the idea of working for free, there is much more to volunteering than working for no pay. Volunteer work provides job seekers with the opportunity to meet career professionals (network), to receive hands-on experience that can improve chances for employment, and to learn new skills.

Many people involved in the job-search process make the statement, "I can't get a job because I don't have any work experience." Volunteer work is one possible solution to this common dilemma.

In some cases, volunteer work can evolve into a paid position. Many nonprofit organizations hire new employees from their volunteer staff.

This approach to obtaining job leads, experience, and employment is a powerful job-search technique that many job seekers are not aware of or simply dismiss as ridiculous. Contact organizations (profit and nonprofit) in your area and see which ones use volunteers. Using this approach can help you to build your network, to gain experience, and to expand your knowledge. The end results have pleasantly surprised many job seekers.

Job Clubs

Often career-guidance programs establish a job club for individuals needing assistance with their job search. (See the article "Why Not Form A Job Club," PASSAGE, Special-Job Search Issue 1991.)

The job club members share job leads, share employment resources (newspapers, lists, or books), and provide each other with emotional support. The job club staff provides members (free of charge) with resume/cover letter assistance, interviewing tips, ways to market skills and abilities, and career-counseling services. Check with career-guidance programs, community programs, or churches in your area to see if they sponsor a job club.

Job Fairs

Job fairs are often sponsored by schools, nonprofit organizations, or businesses. At the fairs, employers and college/vocational-training school representatives are present to talk to job seekers about the job market and career opportunities. This is a great opportunity to network and learn more about your career field. Check your local newspaper or area job centers or career-guidance programs for listings on upcoming job fairs.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Personal Investigation

Once you have your resume completed, you are ready to market yourself. An important approach to finding job openings and obtaining interviews is organizing a personal list of potential employers to target.

You can begin by accessing the Yellow Pages and locating potential employers in the career field that you are targeting. Also, you can contact your area Chamber of Commerce or visit your local library (ask the librarian about available job-search resources) to obtain a list of employers in your area. Secure complete lists that contain company names, addresses, telephone numbers, and contact names. All of this information is important to your job search.

Make certain that you send a cover letter with each resume. The cover letter should be written to the contact person at each company. (See future issues of PASSAGE for information on preparing a cover letter for your job search.) After you send your resume to a potential employer, call him/her and ask for an opportunity to meet.

Conclusion

Hopefully, this article gave you a general idea of the many different approaches you can use to obtain job leads and "get the word out" about your skills and abilities. PASSAGE suggests that you take advantage of every method and resource available to you for gaining experience and securing job leads and interviews. Try not to overwhelm yourself. Stay organized and always be aware of, and look for, the possibilities that you can create for yourself.

For Instructors

Attracting Volunteers–Providing Work Experience

Research Statistics

To help you find volunteers, you might want to consider the following information:

- Women (22 percent) volunteered more than men (19 percent).
- About one out of every five people older than 16 served as volunteers in the United States in 1989.
- Thirty-one percent of women between 35 and 44 worked as volunteers. Eighteen percent of those 65 and over were volunteers, and 13 percent under age 25 served as volunteers.
- Married men and women served as volunteers more than those who were not married.
- Four of every 10 college graduates, 25 or over, participated in unpaid volunteer work. Fewer than 10 percent of high school dropouts did.
- Most volunteers worked less than five hours per week but did so on a regular basis.
- People with incomes over $50,000 were about three times as likely to volunteer as those whose incomes were under $10,000.
- Black and Hispanic volunteers and those 65 or over devoted more hours a week to volunteer activities than others did.

Source: Howard V. Hayge, writing in Monthly Labor Review, cited in Speaker's Digest, Lime Rock Press Inc., 80 Washinee St., Salisbury, CT 06068.

Suggestion

To attract more volunteers for your organization, consider these suggestions from Katherine Noyes, director of program services for the Virginia Department of Volunteerism:

- **Be** sure you don't have stereotypes that limit attitudes regarding what older citizens can do.
- **Decentralize** the organization of and use of volunteers.
- **Attract** children, teens, and college students. These younger groups are expressing increased enthusiasm for getting involved in community services.

Source: Healthcare Community Relations and Marketing Letter, 3100 Highway 38, Wall Township, NJ 07719.

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This newsletter was produced internally by TMCI, 617 Midland, Avenue, Midland, PA 15059. **(412) 643-1350** or **1-800-345-5443**

Management by objective--sounds like something you might read in the business section of a newspaper or magazine. Well, it is. In fact, businesses use management by objective (MBO) approaches every day to reach goals and achieve success. However, did you realize that you also use the same basic approaches every day to complete tasks?

Without management by objective, you couldn't get even the simplest task completed. This approach is just as important to you as it is to a company president.

By becoming more familiar with how the management by objective approach works, you can effectively use this method to help you achieve your lifelong goals. Conducting a successful job search, obtaining your diploma, having a successful career, raising a family, or going to college are all excellent examples of goals that can be reached by effectively using the MBO approach.

Let's take a closer look at what MBO is and how you can use it to your best advantage.

MBO is accomplishing a goal by completing a series of prioritized (organized in order of importance) tasks. It sounds difficult, but it's not. For example, the process can be compared to climbing a ladder; you have to climb the ladder one rung at a time. The goal is to get to the top of the ladder, and the rungs are the many smaller tasks that must be completed before reaching the goal.

When setting a goal, you have to ask yourself many questions. Also, you have to establish a plan. Let's create a common situation and observe how the MBO approach can be used to achieve success.

Situation: You have one week to study for an important exam, and you want to earn a high score. The exam will test your knowledge of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. How are you going to use the time to study, and how are going to make certain that you earn a high score?

Imagine yourself in this situation and review the following exercise.

Step #1 - Looking at the whole picture

A. What important obligations do you have (e.g., family or work-related)?

B. How much time do you have to study each day?

C. Do you have all of the materials you need?

D. Do you have a quiet place to study?

Step #2 - Analyzing your strengths and weaknesses

A. What are your strong areas (subjects)?

B. How much time do you need to invest in the strong areas?

C. What are your weak areas?

D. How much time do you need to invest in the weak areas?

Step #3 - Putting your plan into action; studying for the exam

A. What concepts do you understand?

B. What concepts or subjects confuse you?

C. Why are you confused?

D. What method can you use to end the confusion? (e.g., study group or tutor)

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Step #4 - Evaluating your progress

A. Do you understand the subjects you studied?

B. Have you tried taking a practice test?

C. Can you paraphrase (reword) important basic concepts that will be covered in the test?

D. Has your anxiety (fear) lessened?

Step #5 - Conquering fear

A. Know your strengths and count on them.

B. Know your weaknesses and improve them.

C. Know the importance of reaching your goal.

D. Know when you are ready.

Step #6 - Facing the Challenge

A. Avoid being over prepared (studying too much); this can promote confusion.

B. Try to get some rest before taking the test.

C. Be confident. Do your best.

What have you just done? You have used the MBO approach to set up a detailed plan on how you are going to study next week and earn a high score on the scheduled test. Congratulations!

The MBO approach provides you with a system that enables you to work towards a particular goal one step at a time. By using this approach, you are completing a large task in smaller steps. This reduces stress and provides you with a structure to follow. You have a game plan for reaching your goals. If a project or responsibility seems overwhelming, break it down into small parts and create a game plan for success.

Remember, this approach is used by successful professionals everyday. By understanding the MBO approach and using it on the job, in the classroom, during your job search, and at home, you will improve your effectiveness, organizational skills, and chances for success.

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PASSAGE
"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"
Special Issue–January 1992

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PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 6 February 1992

The Path To Success Begins With Education

Betty Hazlett of Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, is enrolled in the Community College of Beaver County's nursing program. While being a nursing student is not unusual, Betty's inspirational story, which follows, is.

Betty, tell us about the path that led you to the nursing program.

Ms. Hazlett: I guess it really started in 1975. That year, I dropped out of tenth grade to get married. At the time, I thought it was a good idea. Unfortunately, I was wrong. By 1981, I was a single parent with three children, no education, no driver's license, and no job. To adequately take care of my children, I had to apply for public assistance.

What did you do then?

Ms. Hazlett: Eventually, I decided I didn't want to raise my children in this situation. I was also sick of feeling worthless and uneducated. I decided I wanted to make some positive changes, so I took GED courses at the local community college and earned my diploma in 1985. The GED training raised my self-esteem because I realized that I was not dumb and that I could learn. Now I help my kids with homework with no embarrassment.

Why did you decide to go to college?

Ms. Hazlett: Once I had earned my GED and built my confidence, I began dreaming of entering a college nursing program. I chose nursing because it interests me, the employment opportunities are good, and the pay is high enough for a single mother to support herself and three children. Also, I received a great deal of support and encouragement from loved ones.

How did you start to make your dream a reality?

Ms. Hazlett: Well, at first I got a false start. I was accepted into Community College of Beaver County's Allied Health program, and I was doing okay in the classes, but I ran into financial and transportation difficulties. I also began losing my confidence because the course work was hard, and I really didn't feel prepared. I was starting to despair because of all these problems.

What did you do?

Ms. Hazlett: I needed to find a sensible way to achieve my goals and solve my financial problems. I approached Job Training for Beaver County Inc. (JTBC), an agency that administers employment and training programs. They helped me to start over in the right direction. (Similar programs are available throughout Pennsylvania.)

I enrolled in their Single Point of Contact Assessment and Vocational Exploration Program (SAVE) for individuals receiving public assistance. When I entered the program, I had low self-esteem, but the SPOC/SAVE program helped me build my confidence. I liked SPOC/SAVE because I was openly accepted for who I am, and I was able to

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interact with others in similar situations.

I credit the program with showing me that I have options and helping me to discover my potential. I also feel more certain that I am suited for my chosen career and can handle the course work because of the program's vocational-testing process.

Did Job Training or SPOC/SAVE help you in any other way?

Ms. Hazlett: Yes. Throughout my enrollment in different training programs, the JTBC agency and its network of associate agencies have helped me with my transportation and child-care needs. The financial help means I can focus on what's important--my children and my education.

So, what happened after you completed SPOC/SAVE?

Ms. Hazlett: In 1991, I re-enrolled in college. Since I had finished the Allied Health (preliminary nursing) program, I was enrolled in Nursing II. Last semester, I earned a 4.0 while working in a drug and alcohol detoxification unit. This semester, I'm working in a surgical urology unit, and I plan to earn a 4.0 again.

What will be your next big move?

Ms. Hazlett: In May 1993, I will graduate with a degree in nursing. I will take the State Boards in August 1993 so that I can become licensed. Then I'll get a job. I want to work as a surgical nurse because it's always something different, not repetitive. I like change.

What kinds of adjustments have you and your children had to make?

Ms. Hazlett: I don't have the time to be a homemaker. Although I don't have as much free time, some benefits have come from that. I have learned to manage my time better, and I am setting a good example for my kids. It helps the kids to see me studying, because it makes them study harder, too. I'm trying to show them that education is the key to a good future.

Do you have any plans for advanced education?

Ms. Hazlett: I want to get an associate's degree in nursing, then work part time at night and attend school in the day to get a bachelor's degree in nursing. I would like to eventually return to school to earn a master's degree as a nurse practitioner. This might be a little easier than it sounds, because medical employers often provide educational reimbursement.

How do you feel about your future now?

Ms. Hazlett: I'm very excited about the future. I'm determined to get a great job with a good salary. Presently, nurses entering the job market are earning from $16,000 to $25,000 a year, so that's enough money to allow me to improve my situation. I feel I can only go forward, and my outlook is definitely positive.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Ms. Hazlett: Yes. I want to stress to everyone how important education is. Once you get a good education, doors start to open, and you can pick and choose what you want to do with your life. The most rewarding aspects of my education are knowing that soon I'll be earning a living and making a difference in the lives of others.

If you are interested in JTPA sponsored and funded training such as SPOC/SAVE, call your local Job Training Partnership Act Agency, your local Private Industry Council, or your local Office of Employment for more information.

Are You An Optimist or Pessimist?

Optimists see the good in bad situations; pessimists see the bad in good situations.

Optimists feel they can control their destiny; pessimists believe they are the victims of circumstance.

Optimists turn minor setbacks into victories; pessimists turn them into disasters.

Optimists say, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again"; pessimists say, "I'd prefer to watch the game from the stands than to keep striking out all the time."

Optimists love to break through barriers; pessimists say, "Why don't breaks ever come my way?"

Optimists see defeats as temporary setbacks; pessimists see them as recurring events to be endured.

Optimists like to rub shoulders with positive-thinking people; pessimists prefer to hang around with cynics and complainers.

Optimists' cars carry bumper stickers that read, "Isn't life grand?"; pessimists prefer, "Life is a drag."

Source: Frank Grazian, Executive Editor, Communication Briefings

Interested In Entering The Medical Field?

Perhaps you have considered a career in the medical field. Many jobs in health-related fields, such as cardiology (study of the heart and its functions in health and disease), have a promising future. If you are interested in exploring this career option, then you may want to get your start by becoming a electrocardiograph (EKG) technician.

What is an EKG?

Electrocardiograms (EKGs) are graphic tracings of a patient's heartbeat. The tracings record the electrical charges that occur during and between the heartbeats. EKGs are often used by physicians to diagnose different forms of heart disease. The EKG technicians are the people who conduct this testing.

Job Responsibilities

After explaining the procedure to the patient, the EKG technician attaches 3 to 12 electrodes to the chest, arms, and legs of the patient. These electrodes produce tracings of the heart's electrical action. A stylus on the EKG machine records the results on a long roll of graph paper.

The EKG technician must know the anatomy of the chest and heart to select the exact locations for the chest electrodes. Electrodes placed in the wrong locations will cause inaccurate readings.

After the EKG recording is completed, the technician must prepare the electrocardiogram for analysis by the attending physician, usually a heart specialist. The EKG technician must be able to recognize and correct any technical problems that prevent an accurate reading. Most importantly, the technician must alert the physician of any deviations or irregularities in the recorded test.

EKG technicians are also responsible for scheduling appointments, typing the doctors' reports and charts, maintaining the EKG files, checking the EKG equipment, and performing or assisting in more specialized cardiac testing.

Employment Opportunities

Cardiology is one of the most rapidly developing fields in medicine today. New procedures for diagnosing and treating heart disease are being introduced all of the time.

There are approximately 20,000 EKG technician positions in the United States. Research reveals that employment prospects are good, and the outlook should continue to be favorable up to the year 2000, because of the anticipated growth in the cardiology field.

Most EKG technicians work in the cardiology departments of large hospitals. Others may work full or part time in smaller hospitals, clinics, or a doctor's office.

With the proper training and experience, EKG technicians can advance to more specialized types of cardiovascular techniques and testing procedures. Promotions to supervisory positions are often possible.

Education/Training Requirements

Most technicians receive their training on the job from a cardiologist or a supervisor in a clinic. Most training usually takes from six months to one year. Applicants should be high school/GED graduates. High-school courses that help interested individuals include health, biology, and typing. EKG technicians should know medical terms and human anatomy.

Other formal training programs are offered by vocational and technical schools and junior and community colleges. The basic EKG test can be learned in courses lasting six weeks. Also, certification is available to those who pass two written examinations given by the American Cardiology Technologists Association. Although not a requirement, this can help technicians obtain better-paying jobs.

Special Qualities

Mechanical aptitude, patience, reliability, the ability to follow detailed instructions, and the ability to stay calm in emergency situations are all helpful qualities for those who want to become EKG technicians. Starting salaries range from $12,600 to $14,800. Experienced EKG technicians can earn up to $24,000 per year.

*Source: **Occupational Outlook Handbook**, compiled by the U.S. Department of Labor, 1990-1991 edition.*

For more information...
contact local hospitals in your area. For a list of training programs in cardiovascular technology, contact:
American Cardiology Technologists Association, 1980 Isaac Newton Square South, Reston, VA 22090

Employment Agencies: What To Look For And What To Look Out For

Recently, PASSAGE had the opportunity to meet with Sidney Elkin who is the Director of the Alliance for Consumer Protection of Beaver County and who teaches Business Law and Political Science at Penn State University (Beaver Campus). From his experience, Mr. Elkin discusses the benefits and drawbacks of using an employment agency in your job search.

This article expands on the information presented in the article "Where Are The Jobs?" (PASSAGE, January 1991) which briefly highlighted employment agencies.

What is an employment agency?

Mr. Elkin: It is an organization that offers assistance in finding employment. Basically, there are two kinds of agencies.

First, there are government-sponsored agencies (no charge for services). The government-sponsored agency (Job Service) can be found at local Unemployment Compensation offices. Many companies work through the Job Services for their hiring needs; especially new companies coming into an area for the first time.

The PA Job Service states that their computerized job bank system has more job listings than any single employment agency. Also, the Job Service carries the listings and applications for State and Federal civil-service jobs. So, the Job Service should be a place that you visit regularly.

Secondly, there are organizations that are in business to make a profit. These agencies will charge a placement fee which is due at the time you receive employment. This fee is either covered by the employer or by you--the employee.

The placement fees are usually a percentage of your wages (during your first year of employment). Depending on the employment agency, the placement fees are sometimes payable before the job starts. If you have been out of work for awhile, paying this fee could be cost prohibitive. (A $15,000 a year job could cost you at least $1,500--10% of the yearly earnings of your first year of employment.)

Why do employers use employment agencies?

Mr. Elkin: Many companies like to use an employment agency to screen the job applicants. The employment agency arranges interviews only for the clients who are qualified and interested in the position.

This means the company does not have to advertise for the position, sift through all the responses to locate the best candidates, and call to arrange the interviews. Because this service is beneficial to employers, some employers are willing to pay for the employee's placement fee. With the advantages of using an agency, a significant number of employers do not advertise job openings to the general public.

What should you look for when choosing an employment agency?

Mr. Elkin: You must do some investigation to find out if the employment agencies you are considering are licensed by the State of Pennsylvania and how long they have been in business. The best reference would be a past client. Find out if the client was satisfied or dissatisfied with his/her experience?

Also, you need to ask if the agency gets calls for clients with your qualifications and work history. Be sure to find out everything you can about their fees and payment requirements.

What is your (as the client) responsibility when working with an employment agency?

Mr. Elkin: You must have a detailed resume printed on good bond paper (Resume Writing Series, PASSAGE, September 1991 through December 1991) and a reference list of people who can be reached during normal working hours and are willing to talk about your work ethics.

You must be truthful about your skills, experience, and the type of job you will accept (kind of company, working conditions, driving distance, wages, etc.).

The agency will arrange the interview, but you must sell yourself to the employer to get the job.

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Do you have to sign a contract with the agency?

Mr. Elkin: Yes, they will prepare a contract for you to sign. In the contract, you will agree to keep employers' names confidential and to pay the placement fee if the employer does not pay it. At this time, you can specify that you will only accept interviews with employers who will pay the placement fee.

It is very important that you read and understand what you are about to sign. Do not let them rush you into signing the contract immediately. Take your time; take it home to read if you have to.

If the placement fee will be paid by you, the payment schedule will be included in the contract. The contract should state how much you will owe and when it will be due. As stated earlier, some agencies require the full payment before the job begins, and others will allow you to make monthly payments from your wages.

Check to see what will happen if you start a job and the job doesn't work out. Be careful; you may still be responsible for the payment even if the company closes shortly after your start of employment.

What is a job-listing service?

Mr. Elkin: There is a big difference between an employment agency and a job-listing service. A job-listing service will charge an up-front fee which entitles you to call the service weekly for an updated list of employment openings in your area. These services only provide job listings; you will have to do all of the leg work yourself (contacting the employer, sending a resume, and obtaining an interview). In addition, the listings may not even be exclusive. You could probably find many of the same listings at a government-sponsored agency or in the newspaper.

What are some warning signs that let you know you are dealing with a less than honest job-search organization?

Mr. Elkin: If a newspaper/magazine advertisement or an employment agency asks job seekers for a fee up-front, before any assistance is provided, then you should avoid them. In most cases, these companies are in business to make money--not to help you find employment. Once they have received your money, they usually don't follow through on the promises they have made.

Also, be aware of questionable for-profit schools that promise to secure a student loan for you to cover the expenses of receiving training. Typically, the professional con artist sells you the program, obtains money (your loan)from a lending agency, closes down, and then never fulfills their promise to you. In this situation, you will still be stuck with the loan payment. If you secure the student loan through a bank, the school must be accredited (approved by the State), and you will be in a much better position if something does go wrong. Take your time and check the schools that interest you. Don't be pressured into signing a contract.

Finally, if you attend a job fair, be cautious of the hard-sell approach taken by some companies that encourage individuals to start their own businesses. For example, they may ask you to buy a "sample case of products" to sell door-to-door. Watch yourself; you could lose a substantial amount of money on these ventures.

We thank Mr. Elkin for his time and excellent information. If you have any concerns related to employment agencies, he can be contacted at (412) 728-7267.

The Job Seeker's Employee Agency Checklist

If you are about to use an employment agency in your job search, remember that:

- ☐ Employment agencies may give tests to applicants to determine their skills and personality types.
- ☐ You don't have to be unemployed to register at an employment agency.
- ☐ You can register at more than one agency if you think it will help.
- ☐ You don't have to accept an interview if you are not interested.
- ☐ You have the option to only accept interviews for companies that will pay the placement fee.
- ☐ There are also specialized agencies in existence that deal in one area or career field (e.g., medical, financial, clerical, etc.).
- ☐ Don't give anyone money before any services are given, and if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Preparing a Reference List

If you are seriously being considered for a position by an employer, there is a good chance that the potential employer will ask you for a list of references. Preparing a reference list is a definite necessity for a job seeker to have ready before he/she sends the resume/cover letter.

Use the following information to assemble your reference list and to better understand how to use a reference list to its full advantage.

What is a reference list?

A reference list is a well-prepared (typewritten/quality paper) information sheet that contains the names, addresses, telephone numbers (home and work), and time of availability (possibly) of three to five individuals who are comfortable discussing your positive qualities and abilities to potential employers.

Check your resume; the last line at the bottom of your resume should read--References Available Upon Request. Do not send this list with your resume. The employer will let you know if he/she would like references.

Always have several copies of your reference list available when you attend an interview--there may be situations when you need more than one copy.

Who do you select for your reference list?

The individuals you include in your reference list will be determined by the network of people you know, your past work experience, your current status of employment, and where you are in the development of your career.

Here are some tips for preparing a list that is custom-made for your situation:

- **Try** to include individuals who are in positions of importance or who have some influence in the community. Examples include former supervisors, coworkers, former instructors, clergy, customers who you have worked with, experts in your career field or vocation, and possibly friends who are respectable business professionals.
- **Choose** individuals who can sell you to an employer. Make sure they can be positive, convincing, and spontaneous when discussing your past experience, talents, abilities, goals, and personality traits. While it is important to choose individuals who have positions of importance or influence, make sure the individuals you include in your list are capable of giving impressive responses when an employer calls them. Selecting an Assistant Manager who knows your positive abilities and can sell you to an employer with enthusiasm is better than selecting a General Manager who knows very little about your history or qualities.
- **Do not include** relatives in your reference list. If the prospective employer were to discover that an individual on your reference list is a relative, the employer may conclude that your reference has a biased opinion and may disregard the comments.
- **Make** sure the individuals you include in your list can be reached by the employer. If they travel and are not always available, perhaps they are not the best choice for an effective reference list.
- **Know** when not to include certain individuals. If you are currently employed and looking for a new job, perhaps you should not include individuals from your current place of work in your list. Confidentiality may be your best approach in this situation. Also, you may not want to include your work number in the reference list. If you are in an organization that is closing, or if you have been notified that there a good chance that you may be laid off in the near future, then it is acceptable to ask current supervisors and coworkers for references.

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The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

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- **Be prepared** to obtain letters of recommendation from individuals on your reference list. In some areas, such as nonprofit, academic, and government organizations, letters of recommendation will be requested by employers. Each letter should highlight your abilities and show how you are the best candidate for the available position. The letters are prepared in advance--before you start sending your resume.
- **Do not make** the employer wait very long to receive a letter of recommendation. Conduct some research (talk to individuals in your career field) to see if letters of recommendation are requested by interested employers.

Communicate with individuals on your reference list.

Before you make a final copy of your list, make sure that you:

- **Get** each individual's permission. Never include a person's name without asking him/her. Your references are helping you, and they deserve this courtesy. Also, they may not want the responsibility of being a reference.
- **Keep** individuals on your reference list informed and updated. Let them know if they may be receiving a call from an employer in the near future. If possible, review certain points that the employer may discuss. This will help your reference to be prepared and can make you look impressive to the employer when the appropriate information is given.
- **Supply** each individual on your reference list with a copy of your resume. Do not expect your references to know everything about you. They can use your resume along with their personal knowledge to create a complete, consistent, and accurate picture of your abilities and strengths.
- **Thank** your references. Let them know you appreciate their assistance. Remember, good references are a valuable part of a successful job search.

Now you should be ready to assemble your reference list. Be sure to type your list of references on quality paper. Try to make sure the paper is the same brand/color as the paper you used for your resume and cover letter.

Review the sample reference list to better understand how your reference list should look.

Sample Reference List

References of John D. Smith
716 North Avenue, Newtowne, Pennsylvania 91919
Home: (991) 818-8181 Work: (991) 777-7711

Mr. Martin Crow, Accounting Supervisor
XYZ Corporation
234 Ridge Road
Bigtown, Pennsylvania 91828
Home: (991) 444-8484
Work: (991) 444-7477

Mr. Christopher Stofer, Borough Manager
Newtowne, Pennsylvania 91919
Work: (991) 818-2322
Available Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Ms. Mary Snow, Assistant Supervisor
XYZ Corporation
234 Ridge Road
Bigtown, Pennsylvania 91828
Home: (991) 545-5484
Work: (991) 444-7466

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STUDENTaccesspage 1992 Reader Survey

Students, Instructors, and Program Operators

To help improve the quality of the PASSAGE newsletter, the PASSAGE staff welcomes your suggestions. One method that has been beneficial to PASSAGE's development and effectiveness is the annual reader survey.

Please complete the following survey and mail a copy of your responses to: PASSAGE, 617 Midland Avenue, Midland, Pennsylvania 15059. If you would like to discuss your thoughts with a member of the newsletter staff, call 1-800-345-5443 (PA Toll Free). Thank you for your time and assistance!

Your name: _____

Location: _____

Your occupation: _____

Name of your organization: _____

Is PASSAGE mailed directly to you? Yes ____ No ____

Do you give PASSAGE to someone else to read?

Yes ____ No ____

What types of articles interest you or relate to your situation? *(For example--job-search techniques, STUDENTaccesspage--hands-on exercises, self-help, motivational, researching careers, success stories, labor-market projections, academic skills used on the job)*

_____

_____

_____

What is your favorite article from the newsletter?

_____

_____

What is your impression of PASSAGE's:

Content (information presented in PASSAGE)

____ Excellent ____ Good

____ Fair ____ Poor

Readability (writing style, print size, vocabulary)

____ Excellent ____ Good

____ Fair ____ Poor

Design (appearance)

____ Excellent ____ Good

____ Fair ____ Poor

Utility (useful to your particular needs)

____ Excellent ____ Good

____ Fair ____ Poor

Additional comments on PASSAGE's content, design, readability, and utility:

_____

_____

_____

Can you give one example of how PASSAGE was helpful to you?

_____

_____

_____

Do you have any additional suggestions that would help us improve the newsletter?

_____

_____

_____

Thank You!

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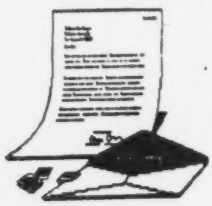
"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 7 March 1992

The Cover Letter: Customized For Success



Imagine that you are an employer, and your secretary has placed your daily stack of mail on your already cluttered desk. Keeping in mind that you have a busy schedule for this week, what pieces of mail are going to attract your attention as the employer? Will the letters that are addressed with generic titles such as Manager, Director, Occupant, Sir, To Whom It May Concern, Personnel Officer, or Hiring Officer be read? Maybe, but most likely not.

The letters that are sent to a specific person will get more attention than the letters addressed only to a position or job title. This personal touch is important to remember when you are preparing your job-search materials, especially your cover letters.

The Personalized Cover Letter

To get an employer's attention and to create a personal touch, you need to always include a cover letter when you send your resume. As a rule, your cover letter and envelope should include the correct name, title, and address of the employer or hiring officer.

The only exception to this rule is when a classified advertisement

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Giving 100% – Why 99.9% Won't Do!

Do you have a talent that has gone unrecognized at work, at school, or at home? Could you possibly be afraid of revealing your talent to others because they may think that you are...

bragging about yourself?

challenging the way things have always been done?

If you think you have a good reason for not using 100% of your talents, then you are not alone and not forgiven! What?--not forgiven? Surely there are some acceptable reasons for not giving 100% of your talents to help others at work, at school, or at home.

Not according to quality consultant Jeff Dewar who presents some very good reasons why you should devote 100% of your talents to avoid atrocities that can happen if you find it acceptable to do things right 99.9% of the time.

For example, would you like to assume the responsibility for what can happen should that missing .1% result in...

- **20,000** incorrect drug prescriptions per year?
- **500** incorrect surgical procedures each week?
- **2** unsafe plane landings per day at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago?

The next time you find yourself thinking about better ways to do things at work, school, or home, tell someone. Always give 100% of your talents.

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does not include the name of the company and only lists an address. This is called a blind box advertisement. In this situation (lacking a contact person's name or title), you can address your cover letter--"Dear Personnel Manager."

If you do not have a name to include in your cover letter and on your envelope, call the company and politely ask for this information. When you call, ask the secretary for the name and title of the person who is responsible for hiring job candidates in your career field. Today, you can no longer expect success by addressing your cover letter with a generic salutation (Sir or Madam or To Whom It May Concern).

The Ingredients

The cover letter should be designed to attract the employer's attention and to get the employer interested in looking at your resume. *Your cover letter should always include:*

- Your name, address, and telephone number.
- The date the letter was sent.
- An inside address (the name of the employer or hiring officer, his/her title, name of the company, address, and zip code.
- A salutation (Dear Mr. Jones or Dear Ms. Smith).

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

Also, it is essential that your cover letter be:

- **Printed** on the same quality paper as your resume (8 1/2 X 11--white, light gray, or ivory bond paper). Make sure your cover letter is typewritten. This conveys a professional image that the employer expects.
- **Brief** and to the point. It should be one page with no more than 200 words.
- **No** more than four or five paragraphs. Each paragraph should contain no more than three sentences. Because cover letters are intended to be brief, one sentence paragraphs are permitted. Just make sure that each paragraph is a complete thought.

The first paragraph is the introduction. This paragraph is the "attention getter." It should mention the position for which you are applying and how you found out about the position and/or company (e.g., newspaper advertisement, the name of any employee or business associate who recommended you contact the employer, or research that you have conducted).

The body of the letter (two or three paragraphs) should highlight the experience, qualifications, and personal strengths that you can offer the employer (not what the employer can offer to you). Keep building the employer's interest and focus on your strengths.

The body should also highlight your accomplishments and knowledge and show how they relate to the position you are targeting. This part of the cover letter should also mention that you have included your resume.

The final paragraph (conclusion) should mention your interest in scheduling an interview and meeting with the potential employer. Also, state that you will be contacting the employer shortly after he/she has enough time to review your resume. (Remember, employers are busy people. Be assertive and contact them; don't wait for a telephone call.)

At the bottom of your cover letter you should type "Sincerely" and your name. Be sure to sign your letter. Lastly, you should type "Enclosure" at the bottom of the cover letter. This reminds the employer that you have included your resume.

Make certain that your cover letter briefly highlights your skills, qualifications, experience, and personal strengths. It should not be a copy of your resume. The cover letter should attract attention to your resume.

Getting Started

Practice and follow the guidelines presented in this article. Take your time and create a customized cover letter for each job/employer you are targeting. If you get stuck, use the role-playing exercise from the beginning of this article to better understand the needs of the employer.

Check the STUDENTaccesspage for examples of customized cover letters. The STUDENT-accesspage will provide a variety of sample cover letters that were written for specific situations.

Tip: Once you prepare a basic cover letter that briefly highlights your abilities and attracts attention to your resume, you will only have to make minor changes to the content of each letter you mail to employers.

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Focus: Sample Cover Letters

Sample 1

This sample cover letter was written after Lisa Simpson saw an advertisement in the local paper. Notice how she customizes her cover letter to show the potential employer that she can benefit the organization. When you are responding to an advertisement, read it carefully and show how you can fulfill the employer's special employment needs.

Wanted: *Sales Representative to sell health-care products and to educate potential customers about new products. Full-time position. Must be willing to work long hours/with strict deadlines. Self-motivated. Some experience required. Send your resume to: Mr. Joseph Smith, Personnel Director, XYZ Company, North Central Avenue, Mayberry, PA 19999.*

Lisa Simpson
110 Homer Street
Springfield, PA 19992
(919) 898-9898

May 1, 1992

Mr. Joseph Smith
Personnel Director
XYZ Company
North Central Avenue
Mayberry, PA 19999

Dear Mr. Smith:

In response to your April 30, 1992, advertisement in the **Mayberry Times** for a Sales Representative, I have enclosed a copy of my resume.

With my three years of experience as a salesperson at Alon Beauty Products, I am accustomed to working under strict deadlines, and I am a self-starter. During each year of employment, I have continued to exceed organizational goals and expand my number of new customers and repeat customers.

Recently, I had the privilege of participating in the promotion of new health-care products and evaluating customer feedback. I feel this particular experience can benefit your organization and your customers. My resume discusses similar accomplishments in further detail.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss my qualifications and skills. I will call you next week. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Simpson

Enclosure

Sample 2

This sample cover letter was written to a company that job seeker Frank Flanders has researched and considers a possibility for employment. He went to his local library and located some business directories and scanned the yellow pages for employers who hired employees in his career field.

Although the company did not place an advertisement in the paper and may not have a job opening, Frank Flanders is hoping this company will consider him for future openings. It is important to conduct research at the library or by talking with employees from the company you are targeting. This will enable you to write a customized cover letter for each company you wish to target.

Frank Flanders
221 Main Street
Dustry, PA 92929
(919) 898-5959

May 1, 1992

Mr. Bruce Bossman
District Manager
ACME Copier Repair
333 Meadow Lane
Dustry, PA 92929

Dear Mr. Bossman:

After conducting much research on ACME Copier Repair, I believe my skills and training as a copier repairman would be an asset to your organization.

I have just completed an intensive one-year Copier Repair/Service Program at the Electronic Technology Institute in Dustry, Pennsylvania. With this training, I have acquired the hands-on experience needed for trouble-shooting and repairing all brand-name copiers.

While I realize that you may not be hiring at the present time, I would appreciate if you would consider me for future employment opportunities. I have enclosed a copy of my resume for your review.

I will contact you next week to discuss the possibility of scheduling an appointment to further discuss my skills and training and how they can benefit ACME Copier Repair. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Frank Flanders

Enclosure

STUDENTaccesspage continued on page 4

STUDENTaccesspage continued from page 3

Sample 3

In this sample cover letter, the job seeker, Raymond Carnavelli, has a friend who works at Limited Unlimited, Inc. Raymond's friend suggested that Raymond send a resume to his General Manager. Also, Raymond's friend said that Raymond may use his name in the cover letter.

Realizing the importance of a good reference, Raymond made certain that his friend's name appeared in the first paragraph of the cover letter. The employer is more likely to be interested in a job candidate who was recommended by a valued employee. Raymond's chances of being considered are much better than a complete stranger's chances.

Raymond Carnavelli
545 Walnut Street
Cedar, PA 15656
(898) 434-4343

May 1, 1992

Ms. Della Gator
General Manager
Limited Unlimited, Inc.
One Center Lane
Provolone, PA 15777

Dear Ms. Gator:

In a recent conversation with Mr. Lyle Lovett, he suggested that you may be interested in reviewing my skills and qualifications for future employment opportunities at Limited Unlimited, Inc.'s Customer Service Department.

Having earned an Associate Degree in Communication with an emphasis in public relations from Cedar Community College, I have acquired the knowledge and communication skills needed to meet Limited Unlimited, Inc.'s quality customer-service expectations.

Courses such as Advanced Public Speaking, Public Relations, and Business Writing have given me the background required to be an asset to your organization. My resume, which is enclosed, lists these areas and highlights other skills and accomplishments in greater detail.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be contacting you early next week to discuss the possibility of scheduling an interview. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Raymond Carnavelli

Enclosure

Sample 4

In this final sample cover letter, job seeker Zelda Lynne wrote a brief letter to a friend to let her know that she is currently seeking employment.

The letter highlights Zelda's career interests and skills. In addition to the cover letter, she included several copies of her resume.

Also, Zelda asked her friend to show the resume to interested employers. In this special situation, a friend or acquaintance can replace the need for a separate cover letter to the potential employer.

This type of cover letter does not have to be as formal as cover letters addressed to employers or business associates. Networking with friends and acquaintances can be an excellent source of job leads.

Zelda Lynne
232 Elm Street
Luckytown, PA 91919

May 1, 1992

Dear Betty,

I really appreciate your offer to provide assistance with my job search. Any suggestions or job leads would be quite helpful.

As I mentioned during our last discussion, I am seeking employment as a computer operator/secretary. At this time, I am completing some brush-up courses and will be attending the local community college in the summer.

I have enclosed several copies of my resume. If you are aware of any employment opportunities, please feel free to distribute copies of my resume.

Betty, thanks again for your help. Hope to see you soon.

Love,

Zelda

Enclosures

Secret to Success

Winning isn't a trick; it's an attitude. There are three rules critical to success.

1. Always be positive.
2. Always be positive.
3. Always be positive.

Source: All You Can Do Is All You Can Do, by A.L. Williams, Oliver-Nelson Books, Nelson Pl. at Elm Hills Pike, Nashville 37214.

Greeters vs. Graters

We have all encountered "greeters and graters" in the world of business phone communications. What are greeters and graters? Greeters are individuals who effectively "greet" callers by practicing good phone manners. Graters are individuals who "grate" callers by ignoring proper phone manners. "Grater-type personalities" can be identified because of their...

- **unfriendly** tone of voice (they sound mad at the world and you)
- **abruptness** (they interrupt you before you finish speaking)
- **lack** of interest in the caller's needs (they don't listen well, and you don't reach the person or department you need)

In contrast, greeters answer the phone with an understanding that each caller may be a potential customer. Greeters can be recognized for their...

- **friendly** tone of voice (they make you feel welcome and important)
- **patience** (they listen carefully)
- **sincere** interest in you and your needs (they take notes while you speak to be sure you reach the proper individual or department)

Many companies are understanding how very important it is to hire phone receptionists who practice excellent manners when greeting customers. In today's highly-competitive business world, companies can not afford to lose business because of phone receptionists who do not treat potential and old customers with respect.

You can improve your phone manner by role-playing different situations which occur between receptionist and caller. Role-playing is an excellent way for you to practice how you will respond to callers who are...

- **upset** with your company's services and/or products.
- **unsure** of who can help them with their requests for information.

Even if you are not seeking a career as a phone receptionist, don't feel that you will never have to answer the phone at your place of business--at one time or another, everyone at your company will have to assume the responsibilities of phone receptionist.

The Workplace Project: An Update

The WORKPLACE project is now located in over 70 libraries (60 public libraries and 15 prison libraries) across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for adults who need to make informed decisions about jobs, careers, and educational training.

The services are made available through a special partnership between Pennsylvania's public libraries and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) agencies.

This service is provided at no cost to you. The service includes access to user-friendly computer programs that are designed to help you:

- Prepare resumes and job-search letters
- Explore career options
- Establish lifetime goals
- Research the employment outlook in your career field and geographic location
- Evaluate your skills and interests
- Locate training/financial aid
- Target prospective employers

In addition, each WORKPLACE location has trained librarians who can help you with locating resources (lists of potential employers, instructional video, and other community agencies) and operating the career-directional/job-search computer programs.

Also, the video tape--**The Choice is Yours** is available for job seekers who have limited work experience.

If you are seeking employment or considering various educational or career opportunities, then contact your local library or write to: *Steven Mallinger, Workplace Project, State Library of Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 1601, Harrisburg, PA 17105.*

Making Your Hobby Pay

Do you have an interesting hobby? Did you ever consider starting a business? Perhaps, it is possible that people would pay for your services or products.

If you have thought about changing your hobby into a business and being your own boss, there are many steps that you have to understand. In addition to having a special talent or skill and great enjoyment of a particular hobby, you must conduct the proper research and evaluate many options (looking at the good and the bad).

The Good Stuff

First, let's look at the positive aspects of turning your hobby into a business. The rewards or advantages include:

- **Doing** something that you really enjoy. (It's a part of you, and you can put your heart into it.)
- **Being** able to make your own decisions.
- **Controlling** your own destiny. (You set the goals and manage your time.)
- **Purchasing** supplies at lower or wholesale rates.

Some areas that have money-earning potential are: stamps/coins, antiques, quilted products, embroidery, stitch work, tropical fish, trading cards and sports memorabilia, glassware, woodcrafting, metalworking, carving/sculpting, houseplants, pet care/grooming, and small engine repair.

The Other Stuff

Unfortunately, there is another side to starting a business that many new business owners overlook--the business plan. Before fulfilling your dream, you need a business plan, and you need to answer many questions.

Having a great love for a certain hobby or having developed skills is not enough to make you a successful business person. A business person has to pay close attention to all aspects of establishing and maintaining a successful business.

Your business plan/evaluation process should examine and answer these questions:

Is there a demand for your product or service?

Will people pay for your product or service, and why will people want to buy your product or service?

What is the market like in your area?

Does anyone provide similar services/products?

What makes your business unique or different from others?

Will you operate out of your house, or will you rent space?

What about regulations that affect business zones?

Do you have a good location (easy access and parking)?

How will you get the word out ?

How much money will it cost to operate (monthly, quarterly, yearly)?

How much money will you charge for your product or service?

What taxes are you required to pay?

Are you comfortable with bookkeeping and projecting costs?

Do you need a business license?

How many customers will you need (monthly, quarterly, yearly) to make a profit?

Can you handle working 60 to 80 hours a week?

What equipment do you need to get started?

What image do you want to convey to customers?

How will you stay ahead of the competition?

The business plan is not designed to discourage you. Be honest, and take the time needed to create a clear picture of your business idea and its chances for success.

Help Is Available

Don't worry! There are many free or low-cost services available to help you with your small business start-up. Examples of organizations in your area include: SBA (Small Business Administration), SCORE - Service Corps of Retired Executives, the local Economic Development Department, and small business incubators (shared office space and shared employees for new businesses). Also, seminars and workshops are often provided by area banking institutions and colleges.

Locate these organizations in the telephone book and find out what assistance is available to you. Take advantage of the resources in your community that can help you make sensible business/career decisions. Starting your own business and dedicating yourself to something you enjoy can be one of life's most rewarding experiences. Just be sure to look before you leap.

Success Story

Meet William (Bill) Hamilton

Bill Hamilton is one of those individuals who is at a crossroads in his life. Like so many others in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, Bill has faced the hardships of losing more than one good job in his lifetime. Frustrating? Yes. Hopeless? Never.

Bill wants people, who have faced similar hardships, to know that it's never too late to think about making a career change.

Let Bill tell you about his situation.

What brought me to this time of decision-making is clear. I have been in the work force for twenty-five years. Nineteen of the twenty-five years were spent as a machinist for a major steel company. I lost this job in November of 1984. The steel plant closed its doors.

For more than a year, I was known as a dislocated worker. Then another opportunity for employment presented itself to me. Once again, I was employed as a machinist. This time, an area packaging company hired me full time. I worked there for six years.

Then this company, like my previous place of employment, shut down in December of 1991. I was a dislocated worker for the second time in twenty-five years. Where do you begin after experiences such as these?

Here's what I have done to help myself. Perhaps you will benefit from my advice:

- **Make** an inventory of your abilities, interests, and skills. I was able to attend a workshop sponsored by an agency that assists dislocated workers with job-search strategies. I learned how important it is to be able to speak confidently about my education, training, and work history.
- **Survey and list** your financial obligations. I had to study my financial obligations in order to find ways to meet or cutback expenses while unemployed. I realized that sacrifices would be necessary such as limiting family spending until I would be, once again, gainfully employed. My personal situation demanded that I take a part-time job while I upgraded my education and training to qualify for the type of position I really want.
- **Use** your personal strengths and improve your weaknesses. I knew that I had to brush up my basic skills before going to college. After enrolling in an adult-education class, I recognized how much I had forgotten in math. My perseverance enabled me to complete a math course and gain the confidence and skills I needed to do college work.
- **Know** yourself well. Ask yourself what it is that you really want to do. Keep your present profession or occupation? Change careers? Go back to school? Immediately look for another job? I had to answer these and other related questions to know what I wanted to do in the future.
- **Check** your bitterness scale. It's easy to be bitter after losing one good job, let alone two good jobs. However, bitterness destroys people, and you cannot move on with your life if you remain bitter. I had to let go of my bitterness in order to make decisions.
- **Look** for educational opportunities and training programs offered by area agencies, colleges, and organizations. There may be no-cost or low-cost programs which you qualify for as a dislocated worker.
- **Keep** a log of your career-development and job-search activities. This record will help you evaluate your progress to date and help you plan future goals.

In closing, I can tell you that you need to be organized and confident. Organization will help you get through the tough times, and confidence will help you to meet the challenges ahead of you.

Best wishes, Bill, and thanks for the excellent advice!

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Preparing for the Interview

When preparing yourself for an interview, try to understand what interviewing methods or tactics the employer will use during the meeting. This requires that you are confident in your skills and abilities and have a resume that accurately highlights these skills and abilities.

Before the interview, the employer will review your resume and prepare his/her questions from your resume. The employer wants to make certain that you understand what you have written in your resume. Basically, the interviewer will try to uncover any information which reveals that you are stretching the truth or that your resume is not factual.

This information sounds pretty intimidating. However, you have to understand that the employer is looking for the best candidate, and he/she needs to find out if you are capable of doing the job.

To prepare yourself for a successful interview, consider the following tips:

- **Know** what's in your resume. Make sure that all of the information is factual. If it is not, then you are wasting the employer's time and your time.
- **Look** at your resume, and write a list of questions that you feel the employer may ask you during the interview. Ask yourself, "What skills and abilities are important to the employer and to getting the job done properly?"
- **Believe** in yourself and your abilities. If you are prepared and know you can do the job, then you will be confident during the interview.

First Impressions

Job candidates have less than 15 minutes to make a good impression at a job interview. More than half of the personnel executives form positive or negative impressions within that time. Twenty-one percent say it's all over within five minutes.

Survey of 100 top personnel executives by Robert Half International, recruitment specialists, 111 Pine Street, San Francisco 94111.

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PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 8 **April 1992**

Functional Skills – "Words Interviewers Like To Hear"

Employers want to know how you have functioned in previous work situations. There are many words which you may be able to use to describe your ability to perform functional skills in the workplace. Let's review some of these words with you:

Representing an employer to the public is a functional skill. Have you ever...

- met with customers?
- helped prepare documents and presentations?
- attended conferences and business meetings?

If your answer is yes to any or all of these questions, then you have performed the functional skill of **representing**.

Deciding is another common functional skill. Search your work history for examples of decisions which you have made about...

- the use of money.
- ways to improve physical safety in the workplace.
- new procedures for completing work duties.

If you have used the functional skill of **deciding**, you must be prepared to give specific examples of how your decisions were helpful. Did you help the company save money? Avoid accidents? Improve morale? Increase production?

Investigating is another functional skill you may be able to talk about during the job interview. Functioning as an "investigator" simply means that you have had experience with...

- exploring the causes of problems in the workplace.
- summarizing problems for others to understand them.
- suggesting solutions to problem situations.

Every work environment has problems. Conflicts among coworkers, equipment breakdowns during production, and complaints from customers may have been handled by you. Think back to situations in your work history that were difficult. Did you help solve any of those problems because of your ability to investigate?

This month's STUDENT-accesspage will help you to discover how many additional functional skills you may already possess. The exercise we have prepared will help you to create an inventory of your functional skills. We suggest that you review your inventory before each job interview. By doing so, you will be better equipped to discuss your functional skills with the interviewer.

Learning To Listen

Quite often we are all guilty of forgetting to listen to those around us. Listening is an important skill for success in all aspects of life, especially in the workplace.

Listening enables you to better understand a situation, address the concerns of others, and enhance your decision-making skills. Here are some tips for improving this necessary skill:

- **Eliminate** distractions. Look directly at the person speaking.
- **Control** your emotions. Avoid prejudging, and listen without interrupting the person speaking.
- **Listen** actively. Nod and smile. Let your eyes show interest in the information being discussed.

Adapted from Success, April 1992

STUDENTaccesspage Focus: Functional-Skills Inventory

Directions

Survey the following list of words which may describe functional skills that you have demonstrated in work situations. Carefully read the general examples that explain how these functions can be performed in the workplace; then, think about your own work experiences and write specific examples of how you have used these functional skills.

Record keeping: orderly keeping of numerical data (number facts) and narrative information (notes, reports, calendars); showing the sequence of events; creating and maintaining files EXAMPLES

_____

_____

Speaking: presenting ideas, facts, and other business information to coworkers, supervisors, and customers (either in person or through electronic media such as television, video, and radio) EXAMPLES

_____

_____

Serving: providing a service (being a phone receptionist) or product (delivering cosmetics to home buyers or waiting on customers in a restaurant) EXAMPLES

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_____

Repairing: performing mechanical tasks; fixing things such as equipment, furniture, or building structures (repairing vehicles, homes, or office machines) EXAMPLES

_____

_____

Evaluating: judging individuals or programs/projects to determine successes; studying and rating performance (evaluating objectives, goals, and outcomes) EXAMPLES

_____

_____

Planning: anticipating future needs of companies, employees, and customers; scheduling a sequence of events; arranging schedules EXAMPLES

_____

_____

Operating: controlling or using equipment that performs certain tasks (truck driving or using a copy machine) EXAMPLES

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Dealing with pressure: minimizing or eliminating risks toward others and yourself; handling complaints and deadlines EXAMPLES

_____

_____

Listening: choosing to comprehend ideas or directions; participating in the understanding of others without having to speak your own views EXAMPLES

_____

_____

Trouble-shooting: preventing, finding, and describing sources of difficulty in human situations, with the procedures at work, or with the operation of equipment EXAMPLES

_____

_____

Motivating: helping others perform better; acknowledging efforts of others and providing ways for them to overcome fears, anxieties, or physical handicaps (giving compliments and helping others) EXAMPLES

_____

_____

** A special thank you to Dickinson College's Mr. Howard Figler who presented in PATH a complete listing of functional skills which you may want to market to potential employers.*

A Self-Discovery Checklist

Richard Lathrop, in **Who's Hiring Who?**, has a self-discovery checklist which is useful to job seekers.

Complete Mr. Lathrop's self-discovery exercise to obtain a better understanding of what you like to do. Please make check marks next to the statements which best describe you.

I like to...

- ☐ work where I can think my own thoughts.
- ☐ work with details.
- ☐ work with ideas.
- ☐ work with people.
- ☐ work with tools, equipment, and other things I can touch.
- ☐ work alone.
- ☐ work as part of a team.
- ☐ express my ideas.
- ☐ see the results of my work.
- ☐ help others.
- ☐ work hard.
- ☐ keep very busy.
- ☐ keep things in order.
- ☐ take on new tasks.
- ☐ do a better job than others who are doing the same tasks.
- ☐ maintain a good appearance.

Mr. Lathrop then asks job seekers to continue the self-discovery exercise by marking their responses to the following personal statements:

I have...

- ☐ the ability to make friends easily.
- ☐ a good sense of humor.
- ☐ a strong sense of responsibility.
- ☐ a cheerful outlook.

I am...

- ☐ energetic.
- ☐ a fast learner.
- ☐ good with words.
- ☐ accurate with details.
- ☐ easy to get along with.
- ☐ careful to follow directions.
- ☐ dependable and always on time.
- ☐ neat in work habits.
- ☐ cooperative with others.
- ☐ not a clock watcher.
- ☐ willing to do extra work.
- ☐ self-disciplined.
- ☐ imaginative.

When you can honestly evaluate your personal "likes and dislikes," you are on your way to discovering the type of career most likely to satisfy you!

Tandem Jobs

Have you ever heard of the expression "tandem job?" A tandem job is sometimes referred to as job sharing. A tandem job generally means that two individuals can work, part time, to accomplish the tasks of one, full-time employee.

Some individuals prefer a tandem job. A tandem job permits them to have more time to be with family or to pursue other interests outside of work. Others take tandem jobs with the expectations of working toward full-time employment. This option offers them an opportunity to qualify for full-time positions that become available.

Employees who have tandem jobs generally have less chance of receiving fringe benefits (i.e., health insurance); however, many employers are willing to offer some incentives to keep their tandem workers (i.e., child-care assistance).

Accountability

Keep a log of your accomplishments at work. Why? When your next performance review is scheduled, you will already have a complete listing of your contributions. Your log does not have to be detailed. Try using your own form of shorthand to record dates, times, objectives, and outcomes of activities which you handled well. What other reasons can you think of to support your keeping a record of your accomplishments?

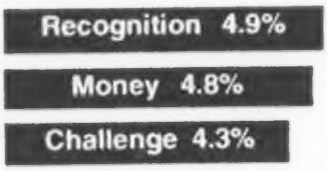
Is There Job Security In Any Career?

No career offers absolute security. Needs change. Attitudes change. People change. Technologies change. However, your choice of an occupation may determine the level of job security you will experience.

Investigate...

- careers related to the universal needs of everyone such as food, clothing, and shelter.
- present economic conditions (local community, statewide, and nationwide)
- occupations related to the predictable needs of many individuals such as health care and education.
- how your career choice will affect where you live, the time needed for training/education, your leisure activities, and even your general health.
- whether your career choice matches your interests, skills, abilities, and values.

According to a survey of 200 employee communication managers (on a scale of 6.0), the top three employee motivators are:



Source: William M. Mercer, Inc., New York City

Many job hopefuls list personal satisfaction as the most important reason for pursuing a particular career. Others rank job security high on their list of prerequisites (requirements)--and several individuals choose the potential to make money above job satisfaction and job security. There are also some individuals who start their own businesses to build a career which is secure, satisfying, and financially rewarding.

There is no easy answer to the question "Is there job security in any career?" The answer to this question varies from one occupational choice to another. The economic principle of supply and demand affects job security in every occupation. Whatever career path you choose to explore, keep in mind your own needs as well as the needs of society.

Most importantly, ask yourself these follow-up questions:

- **Is** this job really what I want?
- **Do** my skills match the job requirements?
- **Where** will this job lead me (e.g., promotions/transfers)?
- **What** can I learn on the job?
- **Will** the pay be satisfactory?

Employee Assistance Programs Reduce Stress

In today's complex society, almost everyone is affected by stress. Stress can occur on the job, in school, and at home.

One of the major causes of stress is change. Change happens in all aspects of our lives. Some common examples include dislocation, updating educational training, financial difficulties, and marital problems.

To help employees cope with changes, many innovative employers offer employee benefits called Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) as a way of addressing concerns related to stress.

These EAPs are designed to help individuals better manage and understand life's stresses and the way personal problems can develop from them. EAP personnel (trained counselors) listen, provide support, and suggest alternative community resources for employees and their families to consult with when resolving a wide-range of personal problems. The goal of this type of program is to provide employees with a confidential place to turn, receive support, and obtain the assistance needed to solve problems.

When employers offer this type of service, they also benefit. Because personal and work-related problems affect productivity, this service enables employers to establish a support network for their employees. This network helps solve employees' problems before they become major issues. Therefore, EAPs promote and enhance cooperation and productivity.

PASSAGE commends all employers and employees throughout the Commonwealth who strive to improve their work environments and to promote personal and economic development through the EAP movement.

What You Don't Know About The Unemployed Can Hurt Them

Sometimes, in your genuine zeal to help the unemployed, you may unwittingly guide them to career and employment decisions which are not in their best interests. For example...

How many resumes have you prepared for the unemployed? The key word in this question is **"for."** You listen to a brief explanation of the individual's education and work history and are immediately transcribing words that best describe this individual to potential employers.

The unemployed individual talks, and you write. Soon, you have a rough draft of a resume that would influence the chairman of IBM. After all, you have prepared hundreds of similar resumes, you know all the right word choices to use, and you anticipate how pleased your client will be when he/she first sees the finished product--a highly professional resume.

"I didn't know that I was that good" or a similar response is what you expect to hear whenever your client has had the opportunity to read the final copy of the resume which you carefully and lovingly prepared. You did a great job on paper--and the client is more than pleased with **"your"** work.

This approach to resume writing, however, can hurt the unemployed. As described in the example, you have not given yourself or the client ample time to discover any academic or communication weaknesses which the client needs to address before applying for jobs.

You need to avoid the pitfalls of sending this client to an interview with a resume that he/she doesn't relate to because you wrote it. Although it is easier and quicker for you to do the work, you may need to examine the benefits of working with the client more closely during the resume-writing process.

All of your unemployed clients need to learn how to properly express their skills to potential employers. Career-guidance and job-development personnel can, unintentionally, hurt their unemployed clients by assuming most of the resume-writing responsibilities. The unemployed need the opportunity to work **"with you"** and benefit from the resume-preparation exercises that require them to speak and write confidently about their education and work histories.

Working closely with your job-search clients may take more time; however, you are the most likely person to help them discover if they need additional vocational counseling, remediational classes, or higher education and training to qualify for the jobs they want for themselves.

When you work with the unemployed during the resume-writing process, use the following Client-Observation Checklist to evaluate their level of participation:

- ☐ **thoroughly** understands the difference between functional and chronological resumes and selects the most appropriate format
- ☐ **easily** describes his/her skills and abilities on work sheets used to prepare the resume (content, grammar, word usage, and spelling are acceptable)
- ☐ **confidently** describes his/her skills and abilities in conversations during the resume-preparation exercises (descriptions of work/education histories, personality traits, and employment goals)

If you observe dramatic shortcomings in these areas, help your unemployed clients to understand that you are interested in their long-term employment security. Suggest ways that you and others can help them overcome these shortcomings before, or during, their job-search campaign.

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

Making Decisions – Involving Family and Friends

What happens when the job you want requires more education and/or training than you have at present? Most likely, you will have to make a series of important decisions. Often, those decisions will not only affect you but will also affect other important people in your life.

That's why we are suggesting that you involve your family and friends in the decision-making process. Their involvement can help you to...

Learn more about your career choice(s).

Family and friends can help you do your research. They can help you locate books, brochures, reports, and articles that support your desire to continue your education and/or training.

Meet with individuals who know more about your career option(s).

People who are friends or acquaintances of your family are more likely to help you because of these relationships. They can offer you specialized information about your career options that may not be found through other sources such as books.

Address problems related to the decisions you have to make.

Ask your family and friends to suggest solutions to your child care, transportation, and financial problems. Although you don't want to impose on them, you may find that they are willing to help you.

Your family and friends can help you with your career decisions if you involve them in the ways suggested. Your job is to let them know that their ideas, opinions, and feelings are important to you. You should also know that they may not always agree with your decisions. Expect and encourage differences of opinion; those differences may help you to be more objective about the career choice(s) you are considering.

Remember that your family and friends (and you) may need time to recognize the benefits of your career decisions. Accept the fact that it does take time to make progress toward your goals. Nonsupporters of your decisions often become avid supporters whenever they see how well you are doing, especially if you maintain a positive attitude.

Know that your decisions can change. You and others can not predict all of the circumstances and events which may affect your career decisions. Sometimes, things happen which may cause you to reevaluate your goals and plans. Never avoid making decisions just because something may change. A good start toward a rewarding job or career begins with the decision to try.

Note: In deciding on the right career path for you, your personal goals and family structure are as important as the qualifications you have and seek; remember that single parents have different demands and responsibilities than two-parent families.

PASSAGE Humor Hunt

Workplace Excuses?

Robert Half, of Robert Half Personnel Agencies, once listed the excuses he had heard given by people as reasons for turning down job offers. These strange reasons are really quite humorous. Enjoy.

A cashier quit a job with a Boston bank because the work site wasn't within walking distance of a McDonald's Restaurant.

A computer programmer told a Houston company she wouldn't be able to work for a 5' 6" supervisor because she couldn't respect a man who was three inches shorter than she.

A financial executive was about to accept a position with a San Francisco manufacturer--until the company refused to pay for his weekly visits to an acupuncturist.

Mr. Half said that to date he hasn't heard of anyone refusing a job because the salary is too high or because the company offers four weeks of vacation time.

Quoted from CAREER WORLD

"Before you give somebody a piece of your mind, make sure you can get by with what you have left."

Anonymous

What do you think about...

Trust In Today's Workplace

Trust among coworkers and supervisors is a necessary ingredient of teamwork; however, many employees believe that it is harmful to trust fellow employees with personal information not related to their workplace responsibilities.

In fact, many employees believe that you should never discuss personal information with your coworkers. What are some examples of topics you think should be avoided when building trust among employees?

Creating Your Own On-the-Job Training

Every work environment offers opportunities for you to learn specialized skills from your coworkers. Some employees have discovered the advantages of making their own on-the-job training opportunities happen. With the cooperation of their supervisors and coworkers, these employees exchange knowledge and skills not required of them for employment. Why should you (and your employer) encourage these types of on-the-job training opportunities?

The Monday Morning Friday Afternoon Syndrome

Stay away from Monday morning "what did you do this weekend" talks and Friday afternoon "cruise or snooze" breaks. Employers are looking to promote people who do not waste company money by avoiding their workplace responsibilities during these notoriously unproductive times of the Monday through Friday work week. Why is it so easy for office employees to fall into the trap of wasting company money at these times during the week? What strategies can you use to avoid being a participant?

Fewer Fish In The Sea

It's hard to believe that 90% of our current workers will still be in the labor force in the year 2000 (American Society for Training and Development). What does this mean to those of us who are currently working?

It means that employers and employees are going to have to work together to meet the demands of staying in business in the future.

Those demands include the increased need for appropriate training and education for existing employees. Employees need opportunities to train and educate themselves on and off the job.

Many employers make the mistake of offering training and educational incentives to certain levels of employees--often excluding lower-level employees who have untapped potential to help their companies grow and prosper.

What can be done?

Suggest to your employer that you are willing to invest your own time and money in a training and/or education program that will benefit the company. Your employer, recognizing the value of your commitment to the company, may...

- **allocate** monies to help you with future training and education
- **approve** paid release time from work so that you can continue your studies
- **include** you in the company-sponsored training and education programs for which you were not eligible in the past

While pursuing your training and/or education program, share with your employer how your new skills and knowledge have begun to help you with your work responsibilities. Whenever possible, have tangible evidence to share with your employer (i.e., a special report which you wrote after attending a business-writing course).

Many employers do not have large budgets to spend on training their employees. Knowing this, you have to demonstrate that you are a worthwhile investment and are willing to make financial and personal sacrifices, too.

There are many low-cost or no-cost training and education opportunities for you to consider. Local colleges, agencies, and civic groups often offer work-related seminars, forums, and workshops to the public. Seek these opportunities to improve yourself and your ability to do your job better.

Homemaking Skills You Need To Talk About

Homemakers are managers--just ask experienced stay-at-home mothers (and fathers too!) how they effectively manage their time, family, and related responsibilities. You may be surprised to learn that employers appreciate the similarities between the skills which homemakers use and the skills which business managers use.

For example, homemakers and business managers both...

- make and follow schedules
- direct and motivate others
- set priorities and goals
- maintain budgets
- act as purchasing agents
- chauffeur others
- respond to emergency situations
- balance work with social obligations

In fact, many company owners and managers like to refer to their employees as members of their family. It often takes the same interpersonal skills to run a company as it would to raise a family.

Whenever you hear someone say the phrase "just a homemaker," you can remind him or her of the importance of homemaking skills. Many of yesterday's effective homemakers have found successful careers in today's business world because they understand the importance and rewards of hard work.

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"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

April 1992

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PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 9 **May 1992**

Interviewing The Interviewer

This month's STUDENT-accesspage highlights common questions that are asked by the interviewer. Knowing what questions will be asked can help you prepare for the interview; however, knowing what questions you can ask during the interview is equally as important. An impressive job candidate knows which questions to ask and which questions not to ask the interviewer.

Questions that are acceptable to ask during the first interview include:

- **What** achievements will the company expect from a new employee in the first six months and in the first year?
- **Is** the work environment self-directed (this job requires that employees work by themselves with little supervision) or more team related?
- **What** are the duties of an employee in this job position?
- **Are** there chances for advancement within the organization?
- **When** do you expect to fill the position?
- **Do** you provide any educational seminars or training for employees?
- **If I do not receive** a response concerning this job opening, may I call you in a week?

Questions that should not be asked during the first interview include:

- **What** type of wages and benefits do you offer employees in this position? (Wait until you get a job offer to ask this question.)
- **How** many vacation days do you provide to employees?
- **What** product do you make or service do you provide? (Know this before you walk into the interview. Do your research!)
- **When** is the lunch break?
- **Is** your organization profitable? (Do not question an employer's economic stability. This will only offend the employer.)

Handling Stress

There are three ways that individuals deal with stress. Some individuals:

- **Become** overly concerned with a stressful problem, going over and over it in their minds, thereby making the situation worse.
- **Avoid** thinking about problems by engaging in a distraction (such as sports) to minimize the stress they feel--but they don't learn anything about handling the situation.
- **Examine** the situation in a controlled manner by talking about it with someone they trust. (A good listener can focus your thinking and can help you create a new outlook. This is the best method for handling stress!)

Which approach do you use?

Adapted from: Harry Levinson, PhD, The Levinson Letter, 375 Concord Ave., Belmont, Massachusetts 02178.

Reaching Your Goal By Taking One Step At A Time

If you plan to start a new career, there are many situations that you will have to face before you reach your goal. A common term that job seekers use to describe these situations is employment barriers. Perhaps these situations should be viewed as challenges that you will encounter while you work toward achieving your goals.

As you meet these challenges in the classroom or in the workplace, understand how important they are to your growth and development as an individual. With each challenge that you successfully complete, you are one step closer to reaching your goal.

Individuals in the early stages of planning their careers often become frustrated because of the time that is needed to get the job they really want. This is a common reaction among adults in transition. If you are starting a new career, some challenges you may encounter include going to a college or training school or accepting a lower paying position to gain experience.

So, what can be done? One approach that has worked for many individuals is to break their main goals into smaller parts or goals that, when met, will eventually lead to reaching the main goal. Here is an example of how this approach can work:

Example

Janis Jones wants to become a social worker. She has just received her GED diploma and has researched this career field by visiting a local hospital, meeting with a counselor at the community college, and talking with individuals in the field.

At first, she viewed the time needed to complete college and reach her goals (four years) as frustrating. However, realizing that this was really what she wanted to do, she set up a plan that will enable her to stay focused and reach her goal one step at a time.

Janis' Plan for Success

1. While I'm in college, I will concentrate on obtaining a variety of useful courses (social work, writing, math, science, and psychology) that will help me become a great social worker someday.

2. I will focus on earning good grades each semester. Instead of thinking about completing four years of school, I prefer to think of it as successfully completing one semester at a time.

3. In my free time, I will volunteer at area hospitals and community programs to gain some hands-on work experience. I realize this experience will be important to potential employers.

4. During my senior year of college, I will try to enroll in an internship program at an area hospital or agency to earn credits and obtain hands-on work experience. This will also impress employers during interviews.

5. During my last semester at college, I will start to network with people I have met while volunteering and completing my internship. These individuals work in my field of interest and may be aware of possible job leads.

6. Also, during my last semester, I will research area organizations that utilize social workers, and I will mail my job-search information (resume and cover letter) to these potential employers.

While Janis' plan is not overly complicated, it is focused and well organized, and it keeps her attention on achieving her goal one step at a time. The basic guidelines that she used and you can follow are:

- **Be certain** that you have chosen the right career field.
- **Be aware** of the many challenges that you may encounter in the classroom, during your job search, and in the workplace.
- **Don't become** overwhelmed or frustrated by the amount of time it may take to reach your goal.
- **Reach** your goal by having a plan, remaining patient, and achieving one small (but important) success at a time.

Deaf Adult Literacy Tutor Handbook

Did you know that approximately 85,000 deaf individuals reside in Pennsylvania? Of that 85,000, many deaf adults do not have the communication skills necessary to advance in their jobs. However, deafness does not have to affect a person's capacity or ability to learn new skills.

Realizing the need to provide services to assist these special adult learners, The Center for Community and Professional Services at The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf has designed a handbook for individuals who will teach hearing-impaired adults literacy skills. This guide, which is entitled the **Deaf Adult Literacy Tutor Handbook**, is the result of a project supported in part by the United States Office of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The Deaf Adult Literacy Tutor Handbook is designed to supply the tutor with the necessary background information needed to work with hearing-impaired learners. The handbook provides tutors with information on: deaf adult learners; language, communication, and literacy; deafness and deaf culture; communication tips; teaching strategies; and the responsibilities and characteristics of the tutor.

Deaf adult literacy programs have an opportunity to impact not only the lives (in school and at work) of the deaf adults enrolled in programs but also the lives of their family members.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the **Deaf Adult Literacy Tutor Handbook**, write to: The Center For Community and Professional Services, The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, 137 West School House Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19144 or call (215) 951-4718.

Adapted from the Deaf Adult Literacy Tutor Handbook, Second Edition.

Schuylkill Training and Technology Center: A Model Program

"This center represents the first attempt at matching the training needs locally with the needs of business and industry," stated Dr. Donald Carroll, State Secretary of Education.

Schuylkill Training and Technology Center in Frackville, Pennsylvania, is an example of a Career Technology Center that provides basic-skills and technical training to adults in Schuylkill and surrounding counties. This center was established in response to a need for a skilled work force which would allow area business and industry to compete in today's high-tech global economy and in response to the need for a local lifetime-learning facility.

Schuylkill Training and Technology Center currently offers a wide variety of training programs which include:

- Drafting
- Automated Office Skills
- Practical Nursing
- Medical Office Technology
- Heating and Air Conditioning
- Computer Technology
- Culinary Arts
- Power Plant and Electro-mechanical Technology
- Adult Literacy and GED Test Preparation

To increase convenience, these programs, and others, are offered on a full-time basis during the day as well as part-time in the evening. Also, the courses and additional services provide students with theory, practical hands-on experience, and job-placement assistance.

In September of 1991, the Center received a $250,000 grant and was honored by state education officials for its programs that tailor adult courses to meet the needs of businesses. Also, officials at the center take great pride in the fact that the technology center is now a model program in the state.

If you live in the surrounding area and are considering a career change, have been laid off, or need retrained, then you may be interested in contacting this innovative center.

For more information...

Schuylkill Training and Technology Center, 101 Technology Drive, Frackville, PA 17931, (717) 874-1034.

More Strategies For Job Seekers

Robert Half, founder of the executive search firm Robert Half International, provides these useful salary and job-hunting tips for job seekers:

- **Know** how long you can afford to wait before accepting a job offer. Don't be too greedy. When you're out of work, try to find a job quickly. Calculate how much it's costing you to be out of work. Calculate how far your bankroll will stretch. It will help in making a decision about a job with a salary that's lower than you want.
- **Postpone** talking about salary as long as possible and concentrate on getting a job offer. Once that happens, it's possible to negotiate a better salary, especially if they really want you.
- **Examine** your options carefully. If you're already employed and receive a job offer for the same salary, don't hesitate to ask for more money if your current position is secure. But if your current job is being phased out, don't fool yourself. Taking a new job at your current salary might be wise.
- **Don't give up.** If you've been turned down for a job, call to inquire about the same position again in a few weeks. The company's first choice may have turned down the offer, or it may not have worked out. Possibly, another similar position may have opened.

Thriving on New Challenges

How About You?

Will you accept a challenge or will you back away from it? Which do you prefer--a well-planned future with little or no risk or a future full of discovery and excitement?

If you go through life always on the safe side, you may never know the thrill that comes from accepting new challenges--the types of challenges which have you so full of excitement that stop and go signals keep going off and on in your mind.

Many individuals want to develop more of a pioneer spirit. They feel it is important to take risks in order for them to grow professionally and personally. However, they are afraid to accept new challenges because of the possibility of experiencing failure.

Here are some tips which you can follow if you want to develop more of a pioneer spirit:

- **Observe** risk-takers in action.
- **Study** their behaviors, attitudes, and interests.
- **Draw** conclusions about their common characteristics.
- **Imagine** yourself in their position of making decisions, analyzing risks, and obtaining results.
- **Accept** new levels of involvement and responsibility beyond your current commitments at work or home.

Hold the Noontime Coffee!

After your morning cup (or cups) of coffee, are you ready to climb a rock in Yosemite?--run the New York Marathon?--swim the English Channel?

Compare this early morning sensation to your energy level at two o'clock in the afternoon. At this time of day, you are more likely to converse with your pet rock, race a turtle, or daydream that you're on a yacht in the English Channel.

If you're motivated, however, you can avoid the afternoon blahs. How? More people are discovering the benefits of walking during the lunch break. The release of endorphins (chemicals in your body), especially during brisk walks, picks you up and keeps you alert to deal with those long afternoon responsibilities. Hold the coffee at lunchtime--take a walk instead and enjoy a healthier and more productive life.

PASSAGE Survey Results

In an effort to improve the quality of the PASSAGE newsletter and to understand the needs of the readership, the PASSAGE staff prepared a Reader's Survey which was published in the February 1992 issue. At this time, we would like to share some of the results of the survey.

Comments suggested to enhance the newsletter included:

- Providing information on the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Utilizing an outline format instead of narratives.
- Making additional copies available to ABE/GED students.
- Highlighting more job finding information.
- Featuring articles that focus on how educationally/culturally deprived persons are striving to improve their situations.

Articles and subject areas that readers found most interesting were:

- Success Stories
- Selecting References for a Job Search
- Academic Skills Used on the Job
- Motivational and Self-Help
- Career Exploration

PASSAGE is being used by:

- Adult Education Students
- Unemployed and Underemployed Adults in Transition
- ABE/GED Instructors and Career Counselors
- Program Administrators

The PASSAGE staff would like to thank the individuals who participated in the survey.

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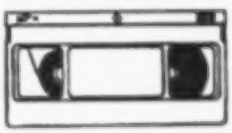
"Survival Skills For The World of Work"



If you are currently seeking resources for your job-search or career-development programs, then perhaps you may want to consider a new video series from Educational Design, Inc. entitled **"Survival Skills For The World Of Work."**

This video series examines the many challenges encountered by employees during their first few weeks or months on a new job and provides solutions to these challenges.

The series is designed especially for adults who are entering or returning to the work force, have recently started a new job, or have experienced difficulties while on the job. It consists of eight videos which are each 20 to 30 minutes in length.

The videos highlight common circumstances that place new employees in situations that could lead to job loss, quitting prematurely, or damaging future career possibilities. Examples include understanding company rules, employee responsibilities, when and how an employee should ask for help, and fitting in at a new job. Also, the videos are designed to be effective in a setting which promotes group discussions.

For more information about this video series, write to Educational Design, Inc., 47 West 13 Street, New York, NY 10011.

STUDENTaccesspage — Interview Questions

Introduction

Did you know that the basic employment needs and concerns of all employers are the same? Quite simply, they are looking for the best candidates who can effectively complete assigned tasks on a day-to-day basis. Because the basic needs of employers are the same, there are many common questions that are asked by the interviewer.

Interview Questions' Exercise

In a classroom or small group setting, review the interview questions below and discuss the appropriate answers that should be given for each. This exercise will help you prepare for job interviews and will increase your confidence during the interview.

Before You Start (Interview Tips)

When you examine each question and prepare your answers, be certain that all of your responses are positive. Avoid, at all costs, discussing any negative experiences that you may have had at previous jobs. Be aware of trick questions that focus on salary expectations and reasons why you may be unemployed. Remember to highlight your skills, strengths, achievements, and on-the-job experiences. Always give examples with each question that you answer.

Practice Answering The Following Interview Questions:

Tell me about yourself.

If you are currently employed, why are you considering a new job?

Why did your last job end?

Why do you want to work for this company?

What do you know about this company?

What is your greatest strength?

What is your greatest accomplishment?

Are you able to work under stress?

Can you meet strict deadlines on a regular basis?

What are your short-range and long-range objectives?

Are you self-directed?

Can you work effectively in a team-oriented environment?

Is there anything about your most recent job or employer that you did not like?

How long do you think it would take for you to make a positive contribution to this company?

What makes you the best candidate for this position?

What did you learn from past employment experiences?

What are you expecting as a starting salary?

What would your most recent employer say about you?

What would coworkers or business associates say about you?

Are you willing to relocate?

Are you willing to work overtime and weekends?

What was the last book that you read?

There is no speed limit on the pursuit of excellence.

Researching Potential Employers

Knowing how to conduct research on a company (potential employer) and understanding its importance are essential parts of a successful job-search campaign. Research provides you with data that can be used to help you get the interview and get the job. Also, research can help you make informed decisions about jobs and employers.

The Library

The library, in most cases, is the best place to research employment possibilities. Most libraries have a periodical department; this area contains magazines and research manuals/directories. There are several directories that contain the information needed for researching prospective employers. Moody's, Standard and Poor's, and Fitch's Corporate Manual are commonly available in libraries. Various publishers supply industrial directories; Harris Publishing Company is a common vendor to libraries. Some of these items are quite costly, and they may not all be available at the same library. So, you may have to visit several different libraries in your area.

If you need help, ask for the librarian. The librarian is the best guide through an unfamiliar department. Explain to the librarian what information you are interested in researching and ask for the industrial directories.

Four Areas To Research

Some industrial directories give a short description of each company, and others go into complex financial data. No matter how much data is presented, there are four critical areas that must be researched.

1. Product

This is what a potential employer makes or what service the employer provides. By all means, know as much as you can about the product. The interviewer will be more impressed with an individual who is informed about the company and its product. Also, this is an obvious source of pride, especially if the company is an established business in the area. If you interview at General Motors, know about the corporation's Chevrolet, Buick, and Oldsmobile products. Your knowledge tells the interviewer that the company is important to you.

2. Turnover

This is the number of people who leave the company. If the number of employees leaving is low, this is a positive sign. Low turnover rates usually mean a good employer. A high rate may indicate a company has employees who are not satisfied with their jobs. An acceptable turnover rate for a company is retaining about 25% of its employees after five years.

Acceptable Turnover Rates for Companies

Year After Being Hired	*Turnover Rate*
1	25%
3	50%
5	75%

According to the U.S. Civil Service Commission, about three quarters (three out of four) of the people hired are working somewhere else in five years.

If over half of the employees quit before a year is over, the company is experiencing a high turnover rate. After three years, if the turnover rate is less than 50%, the company has an acceptable turnover rate.

3. Reputation

What do you hear about the company you are researching? What is written about them? If the company is large enough, ask for information from its

Continued on page 8

Job-Search Strategies

Continued from page 7

public-relations department. Check out how long they have been in business. Find out what charities receive contributions from the company. See if the Better Business Bureau has complaints on file. Have they been in court to defend unfair employment practices or illegal discrimination? What was the result? Examine the company's product or service. The Wall Street Journal at your local library may be of help in answering some of these questions.

4. Profitability

Is the company making money? See if the company you are targeting has published an annual report. Many companies are required by law to make these reports available to the public. Before your interview (several days), ask the company secretary if you could obtain a copy of the annual report. This report will list assets (what they have) and liabilities (what they owe). If you do not understand the information provided, return to your local library and ask the librarian for assistance.

Check to see if the company is planning to expand its operations in the area. Expansion is a good sign that the company plans to remain in the area.

The more you know about potential employers, the better prepared you will be in your job search. Take the time needed to stand out from the rest of the applicants and to make career decisions with confidence.

*"The key is not the will to win...everybody has that. It is the will to **prepare** to win that is important."*

Bobby Knight

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

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PASSAGE
"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"
May 1992

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PASSAGE

"Your Workplace and Job-Skills Information Newsletter"

Volume 3, Number 10 Special Instructor's Issue, June 1992

Quality: Whose Job Is It Anyway?

Pick up any magazine, newspaper, or periodical targeting business and/or education, and you are sure to find an article on how to improve the quality of a product or a service.

Trends in business abound with examples of employee-training programs geared toward increased efficiency and the bottom line--quality. Businesses can no longer afford to be complacent about their position in today's competitive, market-driven battlefield.

Educators are in a parallel situation. They have had to take a hard look at curriculums and instructional styles that many are saying have failed to produce graduates equipped with the basic skills needed in the workplace. Educators are aggressively evaluating old and new ways to improve the quality of our American educational system.

But whose job is it anyway?

Who is responsible for finding positive solutions to the problems and dilemmas which business and education are toiling with?

It is apparent, by the many articles you read, that business and education must join forces and cooperate to regain America's front-line position in the global marketplace. Everyone talks of the need for cooperation; but more actions need to be witnessed in the form of cooperative partnerships.

Much has been written about the basic and technical literacy problems of today's workers. These problems have been identified, analyzed, and publicized by business, education, and the general public. We know that these problems and the dilemmas they create exist.

What we need now are solutions to those problems.

PASSAGE, in its mission to disseminate workplace and job-skills information, is responsible for identifying and reporting solutions to education, training, and employment problems which affect adult-learner populations. This mission can continue with the help of PASSAGE's readers who, like you, have the answer to the question "Whose Job Is It Anyway?"

Please call us at 1-800-345-5443.

Literacy Abuse?

Have you noticed how difficult it is to promote training and education programs which include basic literacy services? It appears that the word literacy (the ability to read and write) has somehow lost its purest definition and its identity to the prefix "**il**."

Listen to the number of times individuals substitute the word **ill**iteracy (the inability to read and write) for the word literacy--as if they were synonyms. Perhaps this communication faux pas happens because the subject of **ill**iteracy has become an emotional, academic, and financial challenge to educators, business people, and workers.

What would happen if we willingly tolerated similar confusion between the correct usage of the words legal and **ill**egal?

Closeness and Conflict: Inseparable Outcomes of Teamwork

Anyone who has participated in group activities understands that closeness and conflict are inseparable outcomes of teamwork.

Closeness develops whenever group members are committed to the teamwork process. This commitment can be measured in the group's willingness to generate ideas, practice their listening skills, and arrive at consensus decisions.

In contrast, conflict has an atrophic effect on the group's closeness and ability to work together toward a common goal. Coworkers, without malice, can find it difficult to practice nonstop the virtues of dynamic group behavior. Their commitment to the group process can be adversely affected by exhaustion and frustration.

Coworkers who have team problem-solving responsibilities can savor the group's closeness while monitoring the process for probable causes of conflict. The Conflict-O-Meter, pictured on this page, delineates when, how, and why conflict may temporarily interrupt the effectiveness of teamwork.

In many situations, these sources of conflict can be eliminated by the group members. For example, the group may be able to change the time, length, and location of the meeting(s) or build their trust of fellow group members through the practice of active listening.

Other sources of conflict offer more challenges to the group's endurance and success. For example, whenever certain members of the team seek only self-adoration and personal recognition, the remaining members may find ways to sabotage self-serving attitudes and inflated egos. What can happen in these situations?

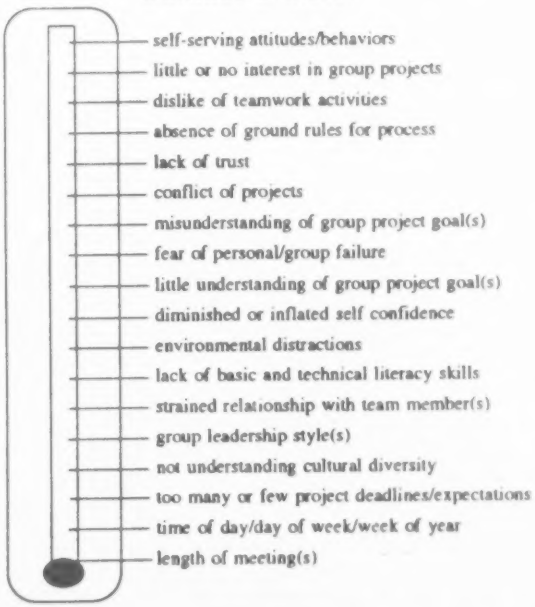
A number of unproductive activities that steal time from the group process and nurture separatism among the group members can happen. Team members can become annoyed and use silence, body language, and non-listening techniques to send negative messages to fellow group members who seem to be promoting themselves instead of the entire team. This is one example of a more-challenging source of conflict.

Degrees of Conflict

Closeness and conflict are always by-products of this process; however, the degree of havoc caused by conflict can often be tempered by understanding the sources of conflict, how conflict affects the group, and what can be done to minimize or eliminate conflict's effects on the group. Whenever conflict is not viewed as a preventable, controllable, or tolerable side effect of group dynamics, employers and employees may prematurely abandon the practice of teamwork. Just because the potential for conflict exists, a decision to abstain from teamwork is shortsighted and may cost companies immeasurable losses in productivity and profits.

Suggestion: Use the items listed in the Conflict-O-Meter as topics for discussion groups. Ask your clients to discuss how these items affect the teamwork process and what can be done to eliminate or minimize their effects on the teamwork process. Some of the language and terminology used in the Conflict-O-Meter can be rewritten to encourage client comprehension and discussion.

Conflict-O-Meter


self-serving attitudes/behaviors
little or no interest in group projects
dislike of teamwork activities
absence of ground rules for process
lack of trust
conflict of projects
misunderstanding of group project goal(s)
fear of personal/group failure
little understanding of group project goal(s)
diminished or inflated self confidence
environmental distractions
lack of basic and technical literacy skills
strained relationship with team member(s)
group leadership style(s)
not understanding cultural diversity
too many or few project deadlines/expectations
time of day/day of week/week of year
length of meeting(s)

How Can You Recruit Others To Help You?

To prepare for the future, we must invest in properly educating today's and tomorrow's employees. As adult-education and/or vocational-guidance specialists, we are responsible for helping others understand that people, not machines, are the driving force behind economic development. We must change the way employers and employees feel about discussing their basic skills' problems--many publicly deny that any problems exist but privately share their concerns and embarrassments.

Government and educational surveys provide us with many statistics to prove that there are real academic deficiencies among the people who staff our workplaces and fill our adult-education and training classrooms. These statistics signal an alarm for action. It behooves us to initiate worker-education programs involving both potential and existing employees, employers, unions, educational institutions, employees' families, and their communities. This joint effort would provide us with the support we need to make progress.

Here are some ideas to develop into strategies that help involve others in worker-education initiatives:

- **Seek** public-relations help. Identify advocates who can help you promote your program and services. Advocates can be found among many different groups of people. Remember that well-known public figures can help your programs receive statewide recognition and local individuals (especially program participants) can help you receive local acceptance.
- **Be** persistent, honest, and humble. Talk with any individual or groups of individuals who will listen to you, but avoid over exaggerations of your program's accomplishments. Too many programs fail because some individuals are more interested in promoting themselves than monitoring their program's true capabilities.
- **Love** your work. Others who can help you will respond to your enthusiasm and sincerity. If you are unhappy with your responsibilities and are in a position of authority, don't expect others to make your job easier by only performing tasks which you dislike. It's fine to delegate work to others, but take a hard look at your motives for avoiding certain responsibilities. Others will be looking to you to see if you are the type of individual who enjoys, at one time or another, even the most mundane of tasks.
- **Minimize** anxieties, fears, and embarrassments. There are very few people who seem to know how to do everything right. Send this message to your clients and program advocates. Admit to them that you have made (and will continue to make) mistakes. Share how you are more interested in highlighting their strengths while helping them to overcome any weaknesses which cause them embarrassment.

Closing The Age Gap and Appreciating Cultural Differences

Adult-education and training centers across Pennsylvania attract individuals of diverse backgrounds and various age groups. Friendships and cooperative learning among these individuals can develop if we provide them with equal opportunities to...

- **introduce** elements of their culture to the classroom or training site (e.g., traditions, interests, and viewpoints).
- **work** together on group projects that benefit from diverse opinions, skill levels, and life experiences (i.e., fund-raising effort).

The mix of wisdom, experience, enthusiasm, and knowledge creates an interesting and exciting learning environment. Observant instructors and trainers can expand their curriculums by encouraging these individuals and groups of individuals to respect their similarities as well as their differences.

The activity which is the subject of this publication was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

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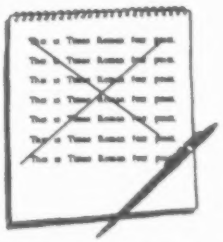
Does Your Writing Impress Or Distress You?



Writing letters, proposals, and other workplace documents is an acquired skill. As an employee, you are sometimes invited, or required, to represent your organization in writing by skillfully blending literary rules with an understanding of the different purposes of written materials. For many individuals, the prospect of having to use their writing skills is frightening.

If you are one of these individuals who is dissatisfied with your own writing style and skills, there are some practical and fun ways to become a better writer. You don't have to suffer through writing assignments alone, embarrassed to seek help.

Here are some suggestions which have helped many employees gain more confidence in their ability to write:

1. **Collect** examples of written materials prepared by your coworkers (e.g., proposals, memorandums, letters to vendors and clients). Study these examples and evaluate the writers' styles including their use of words, sentences, and paragraphs. Also, review the layout and design of their materials to see if any special features were used to enhance the quality of their documents.

2. **Read.** Read everything that you can get your hands on. Read newspapers, novels, and magazine articles. However, do something different while you read. With a highlighting pen, underline words or sentences which especially attracted your attention (i.e., perhaps you came across an unfamiliar word). Then, take a few minutes to review why you highlighted certain areas of the reading material. Perhaps you need to consult a dictionary or thesaurus. Maybe a certain sentence was written so well that you instinctively thought "I like the way the writer expresses himself."

3. **Write** more often. Start with easier writing assignments. Prepare a brief memo to invite your fellow employees to a meeting.

Write your own mission statement for your organization. Interview a client and write his/her success story. Keep a daily journal of your workplace accomplishments and forthcoming activities and responsibilities.

4. **Offer** to do research for others at work. Maybe you are not ready to write an entire proposal, but you are ready to do some research for the proposal. You can help others and yourself by contributing written material for certain sections of the proposal. Examples would include preparing statistics or goals and objectives for the proposal. With each contribution you make comes the confidence you need for taking on more writing responsibilities.

Slanguage

Will slang, those informal, non-standard expressions that filter through our conversations, become the accepted form of speech at work? Do you hear your coworkers, employers, or yourself using slanguage in presentations? Do you, or they, use slang in written materials?

Many individuals have been hurt professionally because they use slang. They were overlooked for promotions because of their inability to speak or write effectively.

An informal survey of PASSAGE's readers yielded these especially annoying examples of slanguage as it surfaces in the workplace.

- We want yuns (instead of you) to help us deliver those books to the learning centers.
- They're goin (instead of going) to be meetin (instead of meeting) in the confrence (instead of conference) room.

The use of slanguage in formal presentations seems to be more annoying than its usage in less formal situations. Those people we surveyed admitted that they often overlook slanguage as it surfaces in casual conversations among coworkers. However, they were seldom tolerant of individuals who used slanguage in professional settings such as during company meetings.

Do Your Clients Have Solutions?

When your clients enter the workplace, they may find that their employers become frustrated with employees who always have problems without solutions. Does this mean that employees' problems are unsolvable?

Certainly not. Most employee problems generally have a number of solutions. However, some employees may feel that they do not have the authority or skills to solve many of their own workplace problems. These are two frequently reported reasons why employees often turn to their employers for help with finding solutions to problems.

Although you can't predict which problems your clients may have the authority to solve in future employment settings, you can help them acquire problem-solving skills that will be useful and encouraged by employers in many workplace situations.

Here are some introductory steps for your clients to follow:

1. **Define** the problem clearly. This may require writing a problem statement on paper.

2. **Rate** the severity of the problem. Ask yourself...

- Is this a problem which needs immediate attention?
- Does this problem affect the quality of my or others' work?
- Will this problem cause any risks to the health and safety of myself or my coworkers?

3. **Evaluate** who can best solve this problem. Is this a problem which you can solve yourself or is this a problem which needs to be solved with the help of others? Briefly explain your answer and rationale.

4. **Make** a list of possible solutions to the problem. You should list everything that you and/or others can do to solve the problem.

5. **Make** a list which reports the roadblocks to your solutions. Here's your opportunity to analyze your solutions for possible shortcomings.

6. **Select** the best possible solution(s). Based on the information you and/or others have provided, you are ready to define the solution(s) to the problem.

7. **Develop** a plan to implement the solution(s). Ask yourself...

- Who will solve this problem?
- How will the problem be solved?
- When will the problem be solved?
- Where (if applicable) will the problem be solved?

This month's STUDENTaccesspage will provide your clients with a sample problem-solving work sheet. Use the work sheet to demonstrate to them how this one approach to problem solving may be very helpful in future employment situations.

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Expert Advice

People are willing to accept anyone as an expert, given the proper credentials and a few examples of "erudition." This can be a major problem in business, where you often have people offering advice or demanding performance without sufficient experience or expertise in a given area. The possibility of being sold a bill of goods from a so-called expert is real. This suggests that we all need to continue our professional education, so as to be able to distinguish the gold from the fool's gold when we cannot affect the cure for what ails us.

Source: Bob Van Voorhis, Jr., "Setting Sail for Success," Teleprofessional.

STUDENTaccesspage
Focus: Problem Solving in the Workplace

Definition of the Problem:
Many of our customers have complained to me that our company's products are damaged when the products arrive at their destinations.

Severity of the Problem:
The week of May 20, 1992, I received six customers' complaints. The previous week, I received four customers' complaints. This is a 65% increase in the number of complaints for any other two-week period beginning January 1, 1992. I feel this is a severe problem because the quality of our company's products is being threatened between the time they leave the production line and are received by customers.

Although this problem causes no immediate risk to the health and safety of myself, my coworkers, or our customers, I know that three of our regular customers have told me that they will no longer deal with our company. An ongoing loss of customers means a loss of profits and perhaps jobs.

Members of the Problem-Solving Team:
I will need to help because I have detailed records of the customers' complaints. My supervisor will definitely need to help because she also oversees the shipping and handling of our company's products. Others who can help include: the two line supervisors, the trucking company's manager, and perhaps Frank who has worked for the trucking firm for twenty years. Frank would know if any changes in the transportation of our products may be causing damage to our products.

(The second half of this work sheet was completed after the problem-solving group had time to meet and discuss the problem.)

Possible Solution(s) to the Problem:

- Retrain two assembly-line employees who are having difficulty with the product-packaging guidelines.
- Order extra packaging material so that shortcuts in product-wrapping procedures will not be necessary.
- Include prepaid return postage labels on all product shipments.
- Report new customers' complaints directly to the line supervisors.

Roadblocks to the Solution(s):

- Extra packaging material will increase the company's costs.
- Prepaid return postage labels will increase the company's costs.

Solution(s) to Implement:
First, we will see that the two assembly-line workers receive additional training (no cost solution because they have agreed to work overtime without pay to better learn the product-packaging guidelines).

Next, we will order packaging material in larger quantities twice each month instead of once each month (the additional costs will be shared between the company and the customer).

Prepaid return postage labels will not be considered as a solution at this time.

Implementation Plan to Follow:
The shipping and handling supervisor will...

- schedule additional training for the two employees who are having difficulty following the product-packaging guidelines-6/5/92.
- order larger quantities of packaging material-6/15/92 and 6/30/92.

My responsibilities will include...

- keeping accurate records of customer complaints for follow-up meeting 7/2/92.
- calling lost customers to explain how we are solving the problem and asking them for another opportunity to serve them-between 6/15/92 and 6/20/92.

Establishing Work-Force Education Goals

Labor-relations cultures expert Mr. Ben Fischer has advice which can help us develop academic and vocational curriculums which better prepare our clients to meet the challenges of employment in the 90s and beyond. Mr. Fischer has extensively studied the skills, attitudes, and opportunities which individuals need in order to make valuable contributions in the workplace.

According to Mr. Fischer, the path to economic progress will be less difficult for today's employers and employees if they understand, and respond enthusiastically to, the many productive ways they can work together. Our job is to help prepare our clients who will secure employment in these new cooperative work environments.

Let's read some material excerpted from one of Mr. Fischer's speeches and discover how we, as members of the adult-education community, can build programs and services that will help our clients who are entering or reentering the workplace.

Mr. Fischer explains...

"The years ahead can produce the human satisfactions that come with solving problems, arriving at consensus, finding better ways to get things done."

Mr. Fischer believes that the era of technology which affects today's workplaces will remove much of the demand for manual work. Therefore, he promotes the idea that our clients will need to be smarter, innovative, courageous, collaborative with their fellow workers, and competitive with their rivals.

All of these desired employee characteristics suggest that we need to find ways to encourage our clients to think creatively, solve problems, debate, speculate, and pay close attention to details. One important way to promote these desired job skills among our clients is to teach them how to communicate better.

Many of our clients come to us with never before challenged skills, creativeness, and abilities. We must help them speak and write clearly so that they will be able to communicate and demonstrate these attributes to prospective employers.

We must lower their frustration levels by methodically teaching them how to communicate by asking questions, discussing problems, and participating in group activities. Our goal is to create learning environments which encourage communication among instructors, counselors, and students. Our clients should notice that we are receptive to their ideas as well as interested in promoting our own academic or vocational agendas.

Based on his own experience, Mr. Fischer feels that this kind of hard work on the part of employees can be satisfying and even invigorating (i.e., the formation of workplace problem-solving committees). He would tell us to help our clients understand how this kind of hard work can be personally rewarding to them and their employers.

Mr. Fischer continues...

"Employees will need to be able and qualified to play a vastly enlarged role that often requires upgrading their education and always pursing a program of continuous learning."

It's clear that Mr. Fischer feels that employees need to upgrade their skills throughout their employment careers. Therefore, we must devise ways to help our clients become excited about the benefits of developing lifelong learning habits. To accomplish this goal, our academic and vocational services must include instructional and counseling practices that encourage these habits. We must show our clients how the skills we are teaching them will not become obsolete once they become employed. When possible, we should relate the skills being taught in our classrooms and counseling settings to their counterpart applications in the workplace.

In addition, we can help our clients develop a positive attitude about learning. The best way to accomplish this goal is to treat them with respect. This treatment translates into very achievable practices such as being available to them, listening carefully to their concerns, finding resources to help them overcome any barriers they face, and simply smiling. So often, we forget that our clients can be motivated to improve themselves by following our example. If we are excited about learning and working cooperatively with others, our clients will be better motivated and equipped to model our positive attitudes and

Continued on page 8

Tomorrow's Workplace

Continued from page 7

behaviors when they enter the workplace.

Mr. Fischer believes...

"Employees must know about the business; how else can they be truly involved? Why ask employees to function well without understanding their own firm (company), since their job is to further the firm's (company's) mission."

Mr. Fischer makes a valid point, and we can help our clients recognize the value of understanding how they can contribute to a company's mission once employed. To accomplish this program planning goal, we must first explain to our clients why many companies often spend a great deal of time and money to develop mission statements, corporate philosophies, and business slogans. We should introduce our clients to examples of these company materials which are often printed and available to the public.

Mr. Fischer concludes...

"Employees must be equipped to, willing to, and permitted to function effectively. Modern technology needs more from workers than obedience and simplistic routines."

There's a wealth of information for us in these two short sentences. As previously stated, we must begin by helping our clients acquire the academic, technical, and communication skills they need to function effectively in the workplace. Next, we must encourage and motivate them to want to be productive workers. We must explain that workers in the 90s and beyond will be asked to share more of the decision-making responsibilities within their companies.

Finally, we can help our clients dispel their fears of modern technology in the workplace by providing them with, or referring them to, the appropriate educational, training and employment programs. These actions require that we too have the knowledge and resources to help them understand that technology is something to be welcomed, not feared.

• Excerpts are from Recent Speeches by Mr. Ben Fischer, Labor Studies Department, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA.

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